

Heart's Ease



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Heart's ease; or, Poems of rest and unre



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COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

THEODORE TILTON

IN TWO VOLUMES

Vol. I. *Heart's Ease*

OR

Poems of Rest and Unrest

'I have immortal longings in me.'

Cleopatra.

Vol. II. *The Chameleon's Dish*

A Book of Lyrics and Ballads

FOUNDED ON THE HOPES AND ILLUSIONS OF MANKIND

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Hamlet. Excellent, i' faith: of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air,
promise-crannied: you cannot feed capons so. *Act iii, Scene 2.*

The price of each Volume is, in England, 6s.; in France, 7½ francs.

London

T. FISHER UNWIN

11 PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS

Oxford

B. H. BLACKWELL

51 BROAD STREET

Paris

MESNIL-DRAMARD ET C^{IE}

45 RUE JACOB, 45

HEART'S EASE

Oxford

HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

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1894

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DEDICATION



THIS gift, O Lady, which I offer thee,
Though slight it be,
Is for a service which no gift, though great,
Could compensate :

One night, when I lay gasping for my breath,
The Angel of Death,—
Whom men call Azrael,—(Terror of the Land !)—
Came, dart in hand,
And stood beside my bed, and called my name,
And took his aim,—
As if to bring me, with a single thrust,
To bite the dust !

Moreover, with his weapon dire, he brought,—
With grim forethought !—
Some snow-white linen,—which, as he avowed,
Was for my shroud !—
And also,—to my horrible surprise !—
Coins for my eyes !—
And candles to be lighted round my head !—
As for the dead !

‘Then why, O murderous Azrael,’ whispered I,
‘Do I not die?’

‘Because,’ quoth he, ‘a woman hath come here
To interfere,
Who watches me with such a wary gaze
That when I raise
My never-failing shaft,—elsewhere so keen,—
She springs between!—
And makes herself a barrier to the blow!—
And hence I know
That here I come untimely, and in vain;—
Nor can remain;—
For since she thus keeps warding off my dart,
I must depart!’

Depart he did!—And I was spared the tomb!
—And all through whom?
—O would I had some better gift for thee!—
For *thou* art *she*!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THESE Poems,—here collected for the first time into a single volume,—were originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Cornhill*, the *Dublin University Magazine*, the *Galaxy*, the *Nation*, the *Independent*, the *Golden Age*, and other periodicals. In 1867, about thirty of the pieces were gathered into a small volume (the author's first book) entitled 'THE SEXTON'S TALE.' In 1879, a second and larger volume followed, called 'THOU AND I'; and in 1882, a third volume appeared, under the title of 'SWABIAN STORIES.' The contents of all these three separate collections are given, in full, in the present edition, and a few pieces are added, of later date. This copious volume (which, for convenience, has a new title) is published as a companion to 'THE CHAMELEON'S DISH,' which appeared in 1893. Accordingly, 'HEART'S EASE' and 'THE CHAMELEON'S DISH,' taken together, constitute in two volumes the Author's Complete Poetical Works.

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PROEM

*GO, little book, a pilgrim through the land,
And beg a minstrel's welcome here and there;
But be content, however thou shalt fare,—
In cottage lowly, or in castle grand!
—And if, of those who take thee by the hand,
Some bid thee enter where the hearth is bare,—
Where love is slain,—where grief hath wrought
despair,—
Thou, too, the lore of pain dost understand!
Thou, too, hast agonized when love was dead!
Where sorrow dwelleth, there dost thou belong!
Thou art not alien where a tear is shed!
So they who love and weep may heed thy song—
A song of sorrow not too sadly sung.
—What bard can sing, except his heart be wrung?*

HEART'S EASE

OR

POEMS OF REST AND UNREST



THOU AND I.

A LYRIC OF LOVE-LIFE.

I.

‘**T**HOU and I!’
Cried he, an urchin gay,
‘Let us go forth to play,
Just we ourselves, we twain!’

Then, to the rock-bound main,
Along the billow-beaten strand,
Amid the flying spray,
He led her by her tiny hand;—
And, just above the water’s reach,
They sat together on the beach,
And piled the shells and sand
Into a palace grand.

They built it like Aladdin’s tower—
Begun and finished in an hour!

The builders thought the building
A marvel to behold,
For Fancy gave it gilding
More golden than of gold !
The Caliphs of the days of old
Held never such a royal court
As did those children in their sport !

‘I now am King !’ cried he ;
‘And I am Queen !’ said she.

Then over land and sea
They held imperial sway
One livelong day :—
A happy day whose sun
Went down on love begun
And twain made one !

II.

‘Thou and I !’
Said he, in graver tone,—
Man-grown,—
Thick-bearded,—at her side ;
A bridegroom by his bride ;
The twain more royal than before,
Though King and Queen no more.

Then forth from the cathedral-door
They stept on flowery ground,
And gazed around,—
From south to north,—
From east to west,—
In sweet bewilderment profound

At which of all the roads seemed best ;
Till, choosing one that led
They knew not where,
The never-parting pair,—
Brave man, fair wife,—
Began, with joint and jocund tread,
Their pilgrimage of life.

And though the path was never straight,
But ever winding,
And hard of finding,—
Yet on they went, with hearts elate ;
For Hope is not afraid of Fate.

‘Dear love,’ said he, ‘the world is wide,
But howsoever wide it be,
It hath no land nor sea
To sunder thee and me :
So follow thou where I shall guide :

‘Beyond the mountains is a dreamy spot,—
A bosky dell,
With many a shepherd’s lowly cot :
Arcadia, whereof poets tell :—

‘A land where all is well ;
Where they who tarry sorrow not ;
Where happiness is each one’s lot ;—
For all the realm is guarded by a spell
Beneath whose magic charm
No creatures dwell
That hurt or harm :—

‘No serpents in the grasses creep ;
No wolves prowl round the sheep

No hungry hawks molest
The pendulous, wind-blown nest
Wherein the oriole sways and swings ;
No scorpion stings ;
No thorn is rapier to the rose ;
No deadly nightshade grows ;—
Nor wilt thou there—
In all the plain—
Find anywhere
The troublous herb of Trebizond
Whereof the bee (too fond)
Makes honey maddening to the brain ;—
Nor the prophetic tree of woe,
The ominous mistletoe,
Which the Blind Thrower flings
At Balder, prince of kings,
To end his reign ;—
Nor wilt thou there, in some unguarded hour,
Pluck by mischance a poisonous flower,
Or bud of any kind of bane,
To sting thy soft white hand, my sweet ;—
Nor wilt thou tread a flint or shard,
To cut thy tender feet ;
But safely shalt thou pass
Through mosses and lamb-nibbled grass—
Through shady glen and leafy lane
Where all the rocks, however hard,
Are piteous, as when Edda's bard
Saw every pebble weep for Balder slain¹.

¹ In the Scandinavian mythology, Balder (who is somewhat analogous to the Greek Apollo) was the god of sunshine and summer. His mother, to guard his life against all possible enemies, exacted from all things in Nature, both animate and inanimate, an

'And though in other lands elsewhere
The earth, that men call fair,
Hath even in its greenness
Some mildew, some uncleanness,—
Yet in Arcadia's fairer zone
No blasting blight is known ;
Nor fades a blossom when it once hath blown ;
Nor has the Vale a wilderness or waste,—
Like wild Sahara ;

oath that they would be friendly to Balder ; pledging themselves that he should receive no harm from any source whatever—whether from fire, water, beast, bird, stone, or bush. All these took the oath, except only the mistletoe—a plant which was accidentally overlooked. Afterwards, when nothing (as was supposed) could kill or hurt Balder, it became a favourite amusement of the gods to hurl various of these oath-bound missiles at their smiling favourite, in order to see them fall harmlessly at his feet.

In the midst of this pastime, Loki (or the Spirit of Evil) plucked up a mistletoe-tree, and carried it to Höder (the god of winter)—who, being blind, had not joined in the sport.

'Why do you not throw something at Balder?' asked Loki. 'Because,' replied Höder, 'I cannot see ; and besides, I have nothing to throw.'

Loki then craftily put the unsworn mistletoe into Höder's hands, and guiding the blind god's uplifted arm, enabled him to take straight aim. The fateful branch violently struck Balder, who fell dead at the blow.

After Balder's death, the Norns (or Fates) promised that if all created things would join in weeping for his untimely end, he should be restored to life and the world. All Nature tenderly complied with this request. Tears were shed by stones, trees, birds, beasts, men, gnomes, and spirits—by every creature save one—an ogress named Thok, who was Loki in disguise.

This universal lamentation of Nature for the downfall of Balder (that is to say, for the extinguishment of summer) is aptly chronicled in a common expression in use among the Icelanders ; who, when the ground in the early autumn begins to be beaded with chilly dew, say—'The stones are weeping for Balder's death.'

Nor font of bitter taste,—
 Like Marah;
 Nor bog Serbonian¹;
 Nor *ignis fatuus* of the fen,
 To tempt unwary men;
 Nor vapour Acheronian²;
 Nor charnel odour foul;
 Nor jackal's mournful howl;
 Nor outcry of the owl!
 'For, O my bonny bride!
 To that half-earthly and half-heavenly seat
 There comes (as to Endymion's dale)
 No snow, nor hail,
 Nor rain, nor sleet,
 Nor wind—except the wooing gale
 That lulled and lullabied
 And kist Endymion³—till he died;

¹ Plutarch in his life of Antony says:—'The Serbonian marsh (which the Egyptians call Typhon's breathing-hole) is, in all probability, water left behind by, or making its way from, the Red Sea; which is here [i. e. near Pelusium] divided from the Mediterranean by a narrow isthmus.'

Milton, in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, locates the famous marsh thus:

'A gulf, profound as that Serbonian bog
 Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old.'

² Acheron, as a river of Hades, may be supposed to have engendered exhalations similar to those which Lucretius assigns to Lake Avernus. Thus, *De Rerum Natura*, lib. vi. 820: 'The regions of Avernus send up, from beneath, a vapour destructive to birds—a vapour in such abundance as to poison the whole atmosphere.'

³ The myth of the beautiful youth Endymion, who slept a long sleep in a secluded glen on the side (or top) of Mount Latmos, where he was watched over by Selené, has received many interpretations: one of which is, that Endymion was the sun, and Selené the moon.

Or only feigned to die, instead,—
Too godlike to be dead;
Asleep in love's sweet swoon, to wake
For pale Selené's sake
Who watched above him, open-eyed :

'A land without a winter's day,
But where the year is always May,
And where, O love, the lovely skies
Are blue as thy blue eyes,—
But not so tearless!—for (they say)
Those heavens, unwracked by thunderous storm,
Unswept by rainy wind,
Drip iris-coloured dews—
Outgleaming all the pearls of Orm¹,
Outflashing all the gems of Ind²:

'Not dews that dry and disappear—
Like these that wet the grasses here,—
For there, in that Arcadian weather
Neither the dog-star, nor the sun, nor moon,
Nor all together,—
At midnight or at noon,—
Can suck, or drink, or dry, or waste away
A single dew-drop of those blessed meads
Whither, O love, our journey leads!
Those dews are deathless! There, on plain and hill
And pebbly shore,
They sparkle evermore!—
Immortal!—like the dripping ooze

^{1, 2} See the opening of the second book of *Paradise Lost*, thus :

'High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus or of Ind.'

Of Helicon's twin-watered fount,—
Or like the drops that fill
Castalia's naïad-haunted rill,
Once loved of every muse—
Ere yet the truant Muses fled :

‘For, darling, I have heard it said
That now the Muses dwell—
Not as they did
In days of yore,
Each in her chilly nook
Upon the high Parnassian Mount—
But that their humbler hiding-place instead
Is now the low Arcadian Vale,
Wherein, according to the tale,
(O sad to tell !)
They climb no more,
Nor drink from mountain-springs,—
But from the valley-brook.

‘And foolish folk suppose them to be dead!—
But no, I say!—
The Muses are not mortal things—
To moulder—or decay—
Or pass away—
Or suffer ban—
For though they be not seen to-day,
Yet they are only hid,—
And by and by,
Upon the coming of the Golden Year
The Muses all will re-appear ;
For how or why
Should any one of the Parnassian Nine,
Being ethereal and divine,

Consent to die?
Some of the train
Must still remain,
Or Pan would blow his pipe in vain:
Yet in Arcadia, goat-foot Pan—
Down to this very hour—
Pipes in his same old way—
And with his same old power—
Blowing his antique reed
With such a skill indeed
That all the Muses must inspire his strain:
—Else he would lack for wit:
—So let the Muses quit
(If so they will)
Their snow-clad hill,
And let them leave all Helicon behind them,—
Yet when we reach Arcadia we shall find them!

‘For there, my love (as I have heard),
Each sound with which the air is stirred,
Each note, though warbled, hummed, or whirred,
Of singing bird,
Or buzzing bee,
Or the cicada’s shriller key,
Or cattle lowing,
Or wild wind blowing,—
All take their wondrous tunes
From those immortal runes
Which Odin uttered whilst He hung
For nine days long
Upon the Great Ash Tree¹—

¹ The world, with all its mysteries of life, death, and destiny—in other words, the whole problem which the universe presents to the

Bound to its world-wide boughs—
Till, as His agony grew strong,
And blood dript from His brows,
He fashioned every kind of song
To be thereafter sung
By every living thing that hath a tongue !—
Songs for the birds in flight,
Songs for the winds upon the mountain-height,
Songs for the day, songs for the night,
Songs which all Nature's voices evermore repeat
With ever new delight:
For Odin's pangs were bitter : so His songs are sweet.
'And fortunate, dear love, I deem
Ourselves shall be, when we shall hear
Those songs supernal and supreme,—
Heard never (so it would appear)
In our gross atmosphere,—
But in Arcadia (as would seem)
Heard oft,—
For there the air is soft ;
And there the noisy, rude,

mind of man—is boldly imaged by the Scandinavian poets in the form of a gigantic Ash Tree called *Ygdrasil* ; whose roots strike down to the very bottom of the earth, and whose branches reach up to the very top of heaven. On this majestic tree, the god Odin (who ranked next after the original Creator of all things) voluntarily hung for nine days—having first pierced Himself with a spear, in order that with sensibilities keenly alive, and through sufferings painfully protracted, He might hear the secrets of Nature, and learn and teach their subtle meanings. When He had thus mastered this mystical lore, He re-uttered it to mankind in rhythmic measures called *runes* : hence all the sounds in the world—whether of winds, waters, birds, or insects—together also with man's minstrelsy of harp and voice—are all traced to a divine origin, and are but repetitions or re-echoes of Odin's runes, which He uttered while hanging on the Great Ash Tree.

And boisterous mirth
 Of rougher mortals in the outer earth
 Can nevermore intrude ;
 And there the shepherds (when they meet
 For love-talk) use a tone
 More gentle than is elsewhere known ;
 A speech like music—gay and clear—
 Yet falling lightlier on the ear
 Than when, by summer's heat,
 The lute is mellowed and unstrung—
 Not sounding; only sighing ;
 Or when the lark,—aloft and out of sight,—
 Sings flying ;
 Or when, at dead of night,
 Leaves rustle which the dews are sprinkling ;
 Or when Titania's bells
 (The tiniest ever swung)
 Are suddenly set tinkling
 To call the fairies from afar
 To Candahar¹.

'But, O sweet love, these words of mine
 Are harsh and grating,
 And fail in the relating
 How those Arcadian notes combine,—
 Now sinking, and now swelling,—
 With sweetness so excelling
 That *I*, to tell of it, would need (in telling)
 A voice as sweet as *thine* !

¹ The frequent mention of this geographical name in modern military despatches somewhat rudely disturbs the old association which Thevenot refers to when he says, ' There is a part of Candahar called Peria, or *Fairyland*.'

‘A land, dear love, of perfect peace!—
For as when Orpheus smote his shell,—
The beasts, though dabbled all with gore,
No longer one another tore,
(But to the strain entrancing
That set them dancing
The lion did with leopard leap
And did a concord keep)—
So, in Arcadia, we shall find
That all the shepherds there
Are harmless as their sheep;—
For there, those wrangling passions, which elsewhere
Are hard to quell,
Yield to the spell
Of that enchanted place—
And all are tamed to gentle grace.

‘Now, darling, to that green immortal dell
Its ancient goddess, still divine,
Our Mother Mighty,
Great Aphrodité,
Bids every bride and groom,
Ere yet their love be cold,
To make a pilgrimage, as lovers did of old,—
With homage due,—
There to renew
The ancient worship of her primal shrine;—
A still-unruined shrine—part bronze, part gold,
Part ivory;—and it stands
Just midway of the plain;—
And thither, ever, from all lands,
Go shepherdess and swain,
And every happy pair

Just newly wedded ;—to entwine
Our Mighty Mother's image there
With columbine,
And with red roses, and white lilies,
And yellow daffodillies,
And sacred ivy-vine :—

'That so Love's altar, ever newly-decked,
May suffer no neglect,
Nor wedlock prove in vain ;
That bonded hearts may beat
With ever happy heat,
And find their bondage to be always sweet ;
That nevermore like sorrowing Clité¹,
Or jealous Amphitrité²,
Or Ariadne, moaning by the main,
Shall any woman pine
With love-sick pain,
Nor sigh through many a vigil long
For love that came and went ;
Nor grieve at passion's false intent ;
Nor bear the world's disdain,
Nor self-reproach, nor mutual wrong ;
For troth, re-plighted at that primal altar,
Shall last life-long ;

¹ Clité, a daughter of the sea, was in love with Apollo, god of the sun ; but as the god's affections were bestowed elsewhere, the disappointed maiden yearned after him with hopeless grief ; and she is symbolized by the sunflower, whose face follows the sun across the sky.

² Amphitrité, wife of Neptune, grew jealous of her lord's love for Scylla, and to revenge herself on her rival, threw a handful of magic herbs into the fountain where Scylla bathed, which fretted the water, and transformed the beautiful and offending bather into a monster.

Faith shall continue ever strong ;
Duty shall never fail nor falter ;
Love shall have nothing to repent ;—
Pride nothing to resent ;
And golden days in peace be spent,
And silvery nights
Bring pure delights.

'A land, dear heart, of heart's content ;
Where eyes whose tears once fell
Have not a woe to weep ;
Where neither murmur nor lament,
Nor discord nor dissent,
Nor sob nor sigh,
Disturbs the halcyon spell,—
But life and love are sweetly blent,
Harmonious as a marriage-bell.

'And look, my love, for now—
To guess from what the bards all say
(And *who* can know so well as they?)
The Valley seems to lie
Not far away but nigh—
Just under yonder mountain's brow—
Where yonder white doves fly.
So let us, thou and I,
Go thither and there dwell.'

—Then, ere as yet the sun was high,
Forth hastening over bank and brae,
Albeit uncertain of the way,
But simply toward Arcadia¹ bent, —

¹ The original and real Arcadia (that is, the central region of the Peloponnesus) is far from justifying the ideal character with which

The lovers thither wandering went
To pitch their tent.

III.

‘Thou and I!’

Again to her quoth he.

‘Come sit, my love, with me

Beneath this mulberry tree,

And watch our children romp and play.

‘How wild they are, and gay!

How light and free!

O blessed is the children’s glee!

Let them enjoy it while they may—

It cannot last—it will not stay!

‘Look, darling, look!

Now, eager for the race

They dash away—

With flying feet and glowing face—

And leap and bound

Like hare and hound,

And hunt each other round and round;—

the Roman poets and their successors have always invested it; for it neither was, nor is, a paradise of shepherds—except in imagination. Instead of a region of lush meadows and blooming pasturage, Mitford calls it ‘a cluster of mountains.’ Grote says, ‘It is high and bleak.’ Modern tourists familiarly style it ‘the Switzerland of Greece.’ But however warlike or mercenary may have been the Arcadians of Strabo’s day,—and however wild and desolate their country is now,—nevertheless the poetic fancy of the world will probably always cherish Arcadia as the spot where Hermes invented the lyre; where Pan gave to the shepherds their syrinx or pipe; and where a pastoral and musical people are for ever chanting of love and peace.

Now, weary of the chase,
The bonny band
All panting stand ;—
And now, like busy elves,
Each digs and delves
And builds of clay
A palace as we did ourselves,—
On that far-off and happy day
Beside the rock-bound sea !

‘O thou and I, once young as they,
How now is life with thee and me ?
When first we started forth together,
The morning dews were on the heather ;
But now the lark has done his tune ;
The dial vergeth to the noon ;
And yet, despite our breezy weather,
The midday sun fatigues us soon,—
Fatigues us more than when we crossed
Those mountains where our way we lost !
So let us rest a little now.

‘I just discover on thy brow
An ornament so passing fair
That not the like did Venus wear,—
A single thread of silver hair !—
As silvery as if finger-frayed
Or wind-plucked from Diana’s braid ;
Yea, silvery more than silver bright,—
As if, at very zenith-height
Apollo’s chariot in its flight
Had crossed, at noon, the orb of night,
And jarred its rays and loosened down

Upon thy sunlit tresses brown
A moonbeam also for a crown!

'Dear wife, there is a rhyme that sings
How Time, with the keen Scythe he swings,
Cuts down all living things;
But false is every fable
That vainly so pretends—
For Time is never able,
Though keen the blade he wieldeth,
To pierce what honour shieldeth,
Or wound what faith defends:
His powerful stroke
May fell the century oak,
But faithful love he cannot kill—
Assault it as he will.

'O sweet companion, tried and true!
There is a love that soon or late
May turn to anger, or to hate,
Until the heart unmates its mate
And cuts the cord in two:
But thou and I, who loved of yore,
Love on for ever, as before,—
Not less and less, but more and more.

'So though we sought but never found
The fabled and enchanted ground
Where bloom Arcadia's happy bowers,
Yet see what pleasant fruits and flowers
Grow in this garden here of ours!

'Our orchard is not grand,—
And yet in all the land

What fairer apples can there be
Than here are golden on the tree?—
They are as round and ripe and splendid
As those that goddess Idun tended,
Which in that Hyperborean clime,
Where gods grew old before their time,
The goddess with her heavenly hand¹
Fed to the hoary-bearded band
Till each regained his youth and prime.

‘What purpler grapes have ever blushed
Than ours—just ready to be crushed?
They have as lush a look
As if they grew by Eshcol’s brook²,
Or ripened red in serried ranks
On old Engeddi’s³ terraced banks,

¹ The Northman’s goddess Idun (or Iduna) personated the spring-time. During the long Norwegian winter, the gods (namely, the vital powers of Nature) languished and declined; and had it not been for the care with which Idun (or the ever-recurring spring) revived and refreshed their wasted energy, they would have perished.

The pretty story that, on one occasion, Idun and her apples were stolen and carried away, and that the gods were thereby left to grow wrinkled and hoary until she and her fruits could be found and brought back, is told with great vivacity in the national poetry of the Icelanders. See the Second Edda.

² The grapes of Eshcol are, to this day, the wonder of the vineyards of Palestine; and Dr. Tristram says: ‘Clusters weighing ten or twelve pounds have been gathered. The spies doubtless bore the clusters between them on a staff. With judicious pruning, bunches weighing nearly twenty pounds can be produced. Not only are the *bunches* remarkable for their weight, but the *individual grape* attains a size rarely reached elsewhere.’

³ Unlike the vineyards of Eshcol, those of Engeddi are now extinct,—or nothing but the terraces remain.

Or burst and bled
Beneath the tread
Of Judah's wine-press¹, flowing still
On ancient Zion's vine-clad hill,
Whose crimson clusters
Hold all the lustres
Of all the summer suns that shine
To flush the wine.

'What whiter lilies ever blow
Than here outgleam th' Iberian snow²?
Or frosty wind-flower of the spring³?
Or crested waves that whiten
When blown by trumpet of the Triton?
Or Jove's white wing
When he, a swan in Leda's arms,
Outblanched their charms?

'What myrtles yield a sweeter bloom
Than thou and I have here entwined?—
None since that doleful day of doom
When (as the Arab maids relate)
The exiled Adam and his mate
Bore with them, out of Eden's gate,
A myrtle-flower⁴, to keep in mind
The sweetness they had left behind.

¹ The ancient richness of Judaea, in the production of wine, is attested in Genesis xlix. 11 : 'Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.'

² Iberia is the Russian Georgia.

³ The white anemoné.

⁴ It is a tradition in Medina (the home of Mahomet) that when Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, the guilty pair were

'So, as for thee and me, what though
(As in the sacred Hebrew tale ¹)
The Nile forget to overflow,
And Egypt's harvests fail?
Yet still, of all our sunny fields,
Not one but yields
A laden wain
Of golden grain
To threshing-floor and flail!
For all the dews of night and morn
Are garnered in our corn,
And all the showers that come and pass
Are treasured in our grass.

'Let Famine, wan and pale,
Thin-visaged and forlorn,
Sit wasting where she will:
But here is Plenty's Horn,
Which as of old, so still,
She empties but to fill,
And fills to empty, each in turn,
Until,
Like Neptune's Urn,
Through which the endless rivers roared,
It ever full is stored,
Yet ever forth is poured,
With ever-emptying, never-emptied hoard.

'So, for th' abundance on our board
We praise the Lord.

allowed to carry with them but a single flower as a souvenir of the Happy Garden; and this flower was the myrtle.

¹ Genesis xl. *et seq.*

‘Or, if the skies bring hurricanes,
Till oak and vine uprooted lie,
And harvests mildew in the rains,
And fig and olive fail and die,—
Who is it murmurs or complains?

‘It is not thou—it is not I.
For God Who takes, like God Who gives,
Is God the same—
All glory to His name!
So if He gives, or if He takes,
It still is for our sakes.

‘From the high Heaven in which He lives,
To the low Earth on which He reigns,
He to the sons of men ordains
That *ills* (as mortals call them)
Shall evermore befall them.

‘For God in His eternal plan
Gives Good and Evil unto Man,—
No less of evil than of good :
Strange mystery, never understood !
But if the wind that bloweth
So cometh and so goeth
That whence or whither no man knoweth,
Who then shall understand
The counsel dark, the purpose dim,
And all the secret ways of Him
Who holds the winds within His hand?

‘Of all the gifts that Heaven bestoweth,
The rod of God’s affliction
Is man’s best benediction.

'If first there cometh laughter—
Or jest—or jubilation,—
Then, swiftly after,
God sendeth lamentation!

'Good is not good, if single;
So good and evil intermingle.
The gold hath need of the alloy.
Is Heaven a place of perfect joy?
Not if, of joys, it lacks the chief—
The joy of grief.

'Had Heaven to such an earth as this
Decreed a perfect bliss,
Then men, unmanned by such a scheme,
Would say, "Now we will doze and dream
And indolently wait
While bounteous Heaven, for *us*, fulfilleth
Our happy fate."

'Instead whereof, God willeth
That men shall labour long and late,—
With struggle, sweat, and groan;
For not a field he tilleth
Is man's to reap except as he hath sown.

'O gentle wife,
The world is full of woe and sin—
Of blood and strife:
Fresh griefs invade it day by day:
How dare they thus intrude therein?
By what strange warrant tarry they?
For how could miseries come or stay
Were Heaven to will them once away?

'If God be God,
And if there be no God but He,
Then how—against His high decree—
Could such things be?
Or how, upon the Cassia-tree,
Could cankers grow?
Or locusts gnaw the lily-leaf?
Or how could rotting rust
Despoil the harvest-sheaf
While Hunger crieth for a crust?
Or how could Plague stalk to and fro,
Or graves be dug, and hearts laid low?
'And yet, dear love, men little know,
While they to Heaven are suing
For all the blessings of the blest,
That oft the miseries they are ruing
Are God's own doing,
Who knoweth best.
Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
Not only are His judgements just
But also kind:
Or if indeed, to our too narrow sight
They seem not so,
We take an erring view,
For we are worse than blind—
We see as moles and earthworms do—
Without a single ray of heavenly light:
'So what the Heavenly Will
Bestows as good we take as ill.
'Should the great Giver give us grief and woe
(As at some future day
He in His mercy may)

We may be sure that still,
Whatever drops of sorrow flow,
Whatever spear into the soul is thrust,
Whatever fiery bolt the bosom sears
With heat unquenchable by tears,—
Whatever may befall,
God's love is in it all.

'God's *love*, I say,—
But not His *peace*:
His love—He gives us day by day:
His peace—He often holdeth back,
As if to keep us on the rack!

'For it is Heaven's behest
That every heaving human breast,
Instead of finding rest,
Shall thrill with joys—shall throb with aches—
Until it glows—until it breaks;—
That good and ill—that weal and woe—
Like equal forces, foe to foe—
Shall in the bosom strive and strain,
Each its own empire to maintain,
Till, wearied, panting, out of breath,
The fainting heart at last shall feel,—
Whichever triumphs, woe or weal,—
Be fortune high, or fortune low,
It matters not how goes the strife
Since Love, and Love alone, is Life.
"For I am fickle," Fortune saith,
"But Love is faithful unto death."

'In all our losses, all our gains,
In all our pleasures, all our pains,
The life of life is,—Love remains.

‘In every change from good to ill,—
If love continue still,
Let happen then what will!
Come wildest storm that ever burst!
Let the tornado blow!
Come crash and overthrow!
Let fate, accurst,
Fulfil its worst,—
Heaven’s bolt without Heaven’s bow!
Be all our treasures scattered wide,—
Till joy, and pride,
And hope, and all beside
Be to the wild winds strown,—
All tempest-blown
To coasts unknown,—
All swept beyond recall,—
All, all save love alone,—
Yet love alone is all in all!

‘If love abide,
If love endure,—
Strong through its sufferings bravely borne,
And through its chastening sorrows, pure,—
O then, whatever other precious thing
Should prove unstable—insecure—
Or like an Emperor’s crown or signet-ring
Which we have found in sleep—
Not meant for us to keep;
Whatever cup of pleasure—
Filled high, to overmeasure—
Be spilled and wasted
Ere it be tasted;
Whatever plume the Fates have shorn

From Fortune's crest ;
Whatever be the prize—the treasure
Whereof our souls are dispossessed ;—
Whoso hath love can then lose all the rest
And still be blest !

‘Love, be it homeless and forlorn ;
Love, be it beggared, tattered, torn ;
Love, be it robbed by fate
Of all its fair estate
Till nought remains its own ;—
No pillow for its head
Except a stone,—
Whereon, from night till morn,
Its temples beat
With fever heat ;
No sandals for its feet,—
Till, naked to the thorn,
The trail they tread
Be tinged blood-red ;
No pilgrim's scallop-shell,—
Nor wayside well
Wherein to dip
To cool its parching lip ;
No wild-bees' honey sweet,—
But only bitter bread to eat,
With wine of gall ;—
Yet love still changes not, O gentle dame,
But ever is the same—the same—the same !

‘Love, even all distraught,
Love, stript of all things,—love, bereft
Till only its own self is left,—

Love, faithful still,
And fearing nought,
Though losing all,—
Love, love,—which no despair can kill,
Nor misery can appal,—
Love from its deepest depth of woe shall call,
And shall of Heaven a boon implore ;
And what shall be Love's prayer ?

'No plea of empty palms
For beggar's alms !—
No golden dross
For recompense of loss !—
No sheltering hut nor hall !—
No goodly heritage, no stock nor store,
No shred of all it had before
Save only its own touch and thrill
To work its wondrous will
And knit two hearts together still,
Twain one for evermore !

'O winsome wife, we soon shall know,—
As onward into life we go,—
There is no power on Earth below,
No power in Heaven above,
No power of all the powers of Hell,
Where all the powerful passions dwell,—
No power to do, no power to bear,
In bliss, in anguish, in despair,—
No power omnipotent as love.

'O marvellous was the might sublime
Which mighty minstrels chanted of

In many a high heroic rhyme
Of giants of the olden time!—

‘They sang how, all distained with grime,
Each panting Argonaut¹,
When home the Golden Fleece was brought —
In sweaty phalanx, all as one,
On many groaning shoulders bore
Their huge ship up the shore.

‘They sang how writhingly were wrought
The twelve great toils²,—
The weariest ever done
Beneath th’ un pitying sun.

‘They sang how fuming was the fret
Of him who, in the viewless net³,
Against the unseen coils—
(More filmy than the spider’s woof,
And yet more fracture-proof
Than brazen chain)—
Tugged, godlike, yet in vain.

‘They sang how sinewy was the strain
Of him who evermore uprolled

¹ In Pindar’s fourth Pythian ode, he mentions that the Argonauts carried their ship on their shoulders, for twelve successive days, over the desert sands of Libya.

² The myth of Hercules and his dozen tasks is thus interpreted by Cox : ‘ Hercules is the toiling sun, labouring for the benefit of others, not his own. His toils are variations on the story of the great conflict which Indra wages against Vitra, the demon of darkness.’

³ The incident of the invisible yet infrangible net which the jealous Vulcan wrought, in order to ensnare in it the unsuspecting lovers, Mars and Venus, is told in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*.

Th' enchanted stone¹ that slipped his hold
And bounded back from hill to plain
To be upheaved agen with might and main.

'Yea, many a song they sang beside,
How the all-valiant gods, in pride,
With one another vied;—

'How naked Vulcan, clad with smoke,
And fierce with jealous ire,
His ringing anvil beat
With such a spark-enkindling stroke
That just his hammer's heat
Had nearly set the earth on fire:
How Jove in wrath the Titans² hurled
Down-whizzing to the lower world;
How Ossa was on Pelion flung³;
How Arthur's sword was three times swung⁴;

¹ If every fable in the Greek mythology is but a poetic representation of some phenomenon of Nature, then the repetitious labours of Sisyphus with his Stone may be taken as another of the many pictures of the daily rising and setting of the sun,—to rise and set agen.

² The Titanomachia, or contest of Jupiter with the Titans, took place in Thessaly;—the Titans occupying Mount Orthrys; and Jupiter, Mount Olympus. The contest lasted ten years; at the end of which time the Titans were hurled into Tartarus.

³ In the war between the Giants and the Gods, the Giants piled Mount Ossa upon Mount Pelion, in the vain hope thereby to scale Mount Olympus. Seen from the south, Ossa and Pelion look as if one mountain rested on the other. There is a local tradition that both mountains were originally one, and were rent apart by an earthquake.

⁴ In the *Idylls of the King*, after King Arthur's sword Excalibur was cast forth toward the lake,

—'ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

How Charlemagne's battle-brand¹,
Which he alone could hold,
Too ponderous for another's hand,
Flashed lightnings through the land ;
How Lion Heart in fury fought
With Saladin the bold ;—

'The minstrels sang and sang agen,
Of mighty gods, of mighty men,
Of giants in the days of old,
Of heroes of immortal mould,
Till all the earth with echoes rang,—
So well they sang !

'But all this marvellous might was nought,
In act or thought,
Compared with Love, when comes the hour
To prove its superhuman power.

'Though all the Furies be its foes,
And buffet it with all the blows
That rained on Hector's helmet,
They could not overwhelm it !

'O Earth ! O Heaven ! Behold !
Of all the powers that are, or seem,
In fact or dream,
Love is supreme !

'No mortal breath,
No lip that uttereth speech or song,

¹ The legend that Charlemagne bore a sword so huge and heavy that no other warrior could wield it, is somewhat dwarfed of its heroic proportions by the moderate-sized weapon now exhibited in the Louvre, purporting to have belonged to that monarch.

No word that any poet saith,
No urn or marble after death,
No art, however long,
No tongue of time hath ever told
The might of love, how manifold,—
The strength of love, how strong!

‘Love, strong as Samson at the gates,—
Love, stronger than the Triple Fates,
Love, strongest of the strong,—in patience waits,
Like Atlas, long,—until at length,
With mighty load, yet mightier strength,—
It lifts this fallen world on high,
And holds it in the upper sky
For Heaven’s own air to purify!

‘Love, fiercer far
Than blazing flame of sun or star,
Is that immortal fire,
The soul’s supreme desire,
Th’ eternal heat
That gives the heart its perfect beat,
And makes this life of ours complete!

‘So thou and I, my sweet,
Sit at Love’s feet!’

—The matron listened, glowed and smiled;
Then caught and kissed each romping child.

IV.

‘Thou and I!’

The old man said,—four-score,
Snow-crowned, and form erect no more.
‘Let us to Him Whom we adore
Give thanks and praise!—
For He Who lengtheneth out our days
Hath given us twain our mortal measure
Of all the needful toil and strife—
Of all the needful peace and pleasure—
Which they who live call life!

‘Our stalwart sons are scattered far,—
All following fortune’s flying star,
That leads the brave where honours are!
Our gentler birds have softer flown
Each with her mate through tranquil skies,
Each to her nest in quiet shades,—
Till now, of all those mated maids,
Each daughter is a matron grown,
Each mothering daughters of her own.

‘The heart alone
Is woman’s throne,—
A shaken throne of hopes and fears;
Yet, as among the twinkling spheres
The star, most fixt, most trembles,—lo!
A woman’s heart is even so:
The more it quivers in her breast,
The deeper its foundations rest.

‘What honours shall a woman prize?
In *love* her queenly glory lies,—

Till in her children's princely eyes,
And in their father's kingly worth,
She sums the empire of the earth.

'But now, dear heart, to thee and me
What more of honour can there be?
What laurel-wreath, what garland grand,
Can thou or I
Snatch with a palsied hand?
Our time for struggle has passed by.
For us, the almond-tree
Doth flourish now¹:
Let others triumph as they may,
And wear their garlands gay
Of olive, oak, or bay²:
Our crown of glory is, instead,
The hoary head³.

'Our threescore years and ten
That measure life to mortal men
Have lingered to a longer length
By reason of our strength⁴;
Yet, like a tale that hath been told,
They all have passed, and now, behold!
We verily are old;—

¹ The almond-tree is an emblem of old age because (as Hasselquist has pointed out) 'the white flowers blossom on the bare branches.'

² A crown of olive was given to the victor in the Olympic games; a crown of bay (that is, of laurel) to the victor in the Pythian; and a crown of oak to him who had saved the life of a Roman citizen in battle.

³ 'The hoary head is a crown of glory.' Solomon.

⁴ 'The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.' Psalm xc. 10.

'Yea, old like Abraham when he went
With head down bent
And mantle rent,
In dole for her who lay in death,
And to the Sons of Heth
The silver shekels gave
For Mamré's gloomy cave
To be her grave¹;

'Or, older still, like him
Who, feeble not of limb,
With eyes not dim,
Upclimbed with staff in hand
To where Mount Nebo cleft the sky,
And looked and saw the Promised Land
(Forbidden him from on high²),
Till, with an unrecorded cry,
He laid him down to die.

'So too, for us, the end is nigh:
Our mortal race is nearly run:
Our earthly toil is nearly done!
Ah, thou and I,
Who in the grave so soon shall lie,
Have little time to see the sun—
So little it is nearly none!—
The night is near!

'What then?
Amen!

¹ 'Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre.' Genesis xxiii. 19.

² 'And the Lord said unto him, I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.' Deut. xxxiv. 4.

All hail, my love, good cheer !
Keep back thy unshed tear !
Not thou nor I
Shall mourn or sigh !
Nay now, we twain—
Old man, old wife—
In just the few days that remain—
Let us make merry!—let us laugh!—
For now at length we quaff
The last, best wine of life,—
The very last, the very best,
The double cup of love and rest !

‘What though the groaning world declare
That life is but a load of care?—
A burden wearisome to bear?—
That as we journey down the years
The path is through a Vale of Tears?—
Yet we who have the burden borne,
And travelled until travel-worn,
Forget the weight upon the back,
Forget the long and weary track,
And sit remembering here to-day
How we were children at our play;—

‘And, half in doze, at idle ease,
Before the hearth-fire’s dying brands,
With elbows on our trembling knees,
With chins between our wrinkled hands,
We sail unnavigable seas,
We roam impenetrable lands,
We leap from clime to clime,
We conquer space and time;—

'For, every glowing ember
Enkindles fancy to remember,—
Till all the once-forgotten past,
Long gone, comes back to us at last;—
As if the sea should render up
From out its treasure-hiding caves
The King of Thulé's golden cup';
Or the green Adriatic's waves
Back to the wondering Doge should fling
Venetia's bridal-ring;
Or Ghizeh's time-defying graves
Should burst their marble lids asunder,
And to the Bedouin's wonder
Reveal th' Egyptian jewels hid
By that sphinx-guarded pyramid
Which they are buried under!

'And howsoever strange it seems,
The dearest of our drowsy dreams
Is of that billow-beaten shore
Where, with our childish hands,
We piled the salty sands
Into a palace that still stands!—
Not where it first arose,
Not where the wild wind blows,
Not by the ocean's roar,—
(For long ago those turrets fell
Beneath that billowy swell),—
But still within the heart's deep core

¹ See Marguerite's song in *Faust*, metrically translated in this volume.

Our tumbled tower we oft restore
And ever build it o'er and o'er!

'We have one palace more,—
Not made with hands,—
Nor have our feet yet entered at its door!
It lieth not behind us, but before!

'Dear love, our pilgrimage is thither tending,
And there shall have its ending.

'At first we sought, like all mankind,
The land that all have failed to find,—
Arcadia, by the poets sung,—
That pleasing phantom of the mind
That lured our feet when we were young;

'At last, with souls no longer haunted
By that vain vision, soon forgot,
We seek,—not that Utopia fair
That vanished into viewless air,—
Not that all-rosy realm which, like the flowery spot .
Where Eden's garden once was planted,
No longer is enchanted,
And bloometh not;—
We seek,—with unmisguided feet,
And hearts undaunted,—
Not hope's mirage, not fancy's cheat,
Not faith's fair fabulous pretence,
Not any phantom to beguile
The spirit for a while,
Then disappoint the sense;—
We seek,—not on the mocking earth, not here
(Yet haply not far hence)
That Heavenly City, crystal clear,

Which, lustrous with a light intense,
Was seen from Patmos¹ by the Seer
Whose century-old and dazzled eyes
Beheld it shining in the skies!—

‘No vision, for a moment bright,
Then taking flight!
But its huge bulk was measured in his sight
(As he hath told)
By an archangel’s reed of gold;
Length, breadth, and height
Each equalling each²;
Far as the gazer’s eye could reach;
Each several side twelve thousand furlongs square,—
All glittering in the upper air!—
So lustrous long, so flashing high,
So blazing broad that no mere mortal eye,
Within its tiny ball,
Could then (or now) encompass all
The whole red³, radiant girth

¹ The island of Patmos—to which St. John was exiled by the Roman government, and where (according to a tradition of the early Church) he wrote the Apocalypse—is one of the Sporades, in the Grecian Archipelago. Its modern name is Patmo. Travellers are pointed to a spot on the side of a hill, not far from a Greek monastery, as the place where the Seer stood when he beheld the vision of the New Jerusalem. See Rev. xxi. 3.

² The figure of a cube seems to have been to the oriental mind a symbol of ideal beauty in architecture,—as is shown not only by St. John’s description of the proportions of the Celestial City, but also by the plan both of the Jewish Tabernacle and of the Mahometan Kaaba.

³ ‘And the city was pure gold.’ Rev. xxi. 18. Hence it was *red*—which is the universal epithet in poetry to describe the colour of pure gold.

Of that all-golden City of the Blest,—
Outmeasuring every mountain on the earth!
'For neither Chimborazo's crest,
Where the tired eagle stops to rest;
Nor Hecla's burning pile,
Whose smoke rolls up for many a lofty mile;
Nor Tenerif's cloud-confronting isle;
Nor the Five Cities of the Plain¹;
Nor that engulfing main²
Wherein their shaken towers, in falling,
Sank in th' asphaltic flood³, appalling;—
Not all these mountains, cities, seas,—
Though heaped in one,—nor seven times these!—
Could measure forth the space
Of God's great dwelling-place;—
That City of Delight,
Fixt in Heaven's highest height—
Unsunned, unmooned,
Yet needing not the ray
Of any orb that gilds the day
Or beautifies the night;
Untempled⁴, yet attuned

¹ These were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Tseboim, and Zoar. Of these, Zoar is known to have escaped. The old opinion that the other four were swallowed up by the Dead Sea has been re-affirmed by some modern travellers, but disputed by others. Thus, Robinson holds that the cities were submerged; but Reland insists that there is no reason, either in Scripture or history, for supposing that the cities were destroyed by submersion, or were submerged at all.

² The Dead Sea.

³ Bitumen is thrown up from the bottom; and it floats in great masses on the surface, oozes through the fissures of rocks, and is deposited with gravel on the beach. It is called Jews' pitch.

⁴ 'And I saw no temple therein.' Rev. xxi. 22.

To praise divine :
 For they who worship there need not a shrine,
 Since they behold His face.

'Now hark to me, dear love, while I repeat
 The sacred story
 That tells us of that City's glory!—

'For there, through many a golden street,
 Th' Immortal River floweth,
 Upon whose banks there groweth—
 On either side—
 The Tree of Life, in groves that midway meet
 To overarch the amber tide¹,
 Which pictures all their pendent fruits
 Deep in the glassy flood that glides along their roots ;
 And ever as the waveless stream goes wending
 Its tranquil way,
 It watereth plants that need no other tending,
 Self-tended they ;—
 And, chief, that amaranthine flower², transplanted first

¹ Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, says : 'As this Tree of Life is stated to be in the streets of the city, and on each side of the river, the *tree* must here be an enallage of the singular for the plural number, *trees of life*, or trees which yielded fruit by which life was preserved. The account in Ezekiel (chap. xlvii. 12) is this : "And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade ; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months ; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."'

² Milton's allusion to the amaranth is the following :

'Immortal amarant, a flower which once
 In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life
 Began to bloom ; but soon for man's offence
 To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,

From Heaven to Eden's garden,
To bloom awhile ere man was yet accurst,
But then, on his offending,
And while his punishment was pending,—
In heavenly token of his pardon
Plucked back on high, above all death and doom,
To where, beyond the tomb,
It now empurples with a fadeless bloom
A summer never-ending,—
To crown victorious souls, on their ascending,
With that immortal wreath for which they died con-
tending.

'And each of all the twelve great portals
Is one great pearl',—
Gold-banded, like a ring of fair device ;
With adamantine hinges, ever-during ;
Each pearl with lustre so alluring
That though beyond the gaze of mortals,—
Above the earth's wild whirl,—
Yet from afar it sweetly doth entice
The souls of men to wish them in that Paradise ;
Each pearl of greater price

And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life,
And where the river of bliss through midst of Heaven
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream.'

P. L. Bk. III. 353 et seq.

'*Amarantus flos, symbolum est immortalitatis.*'—Clem. Alex.

The amaranth has the colour of purple velvet.

St. Peter alludes to the flower thus : ' An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that *fadeth not away*' (*amaranton*). 1 Pet. i. 4.

'Ye shall receive a crown of glory that *fadeth not away*' (*amaranton*). *Ibid.* v. 4.

¹ 'And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl.' Rev. xxi. 21.

Than in the parable¹ is told
Of him who all his treasures sold
And went and bought with these
That jewel pure and rare
With which none others could compare—
Except the pearls those portals hold,
Ten thousand times more fair!

‘And at each portal an archangel waits²,
To keep wide open those eternal gates;
For he who saw was bid to say
“The gates shall not be shut by day,
And there is no night there³.”

‘And each foundation glittereth fair
With heavenly stones, half-dimmed with earthly names,
As if to veil from mortal eyes their flames—
Lest their unshaded brightness should excel
All power of tongue to tell,—
Or lest, with eyes transpierced with pain,
The Holy Seer had fallen blind,—
Whereby, beheld too plain,
The vision, unrecorded to mankind,
Had come and passed in vain.

‘And those illustrious stones—the mystic twelve—
Each for a tribe of Israel’s line⁴—
More fiercely shine

¹ St. Matthew xiii. 46.

² ‘Twelve gates; and, at the gates, twelve angels.’ Rev. xxi. 12.

³ ‘And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day · for there shall be no night there.’ *Ibid.* 25.

⁴ ‘Twelve gates . . . and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.’ Rev. xxi. 12.

Than any for which mortals delve
In any earthly mine!—

‘For when Golconda or Brazil
In cavern dark, or deep-dug hill,
Rewards the slave’s dim-lighted glance
With that fair spark which happy chance
Unblinds his searching eyes to see,
And, for his finding, sets him free¹;—

‘Not this soul-ransoming gem,
Nor Caesar’s glittering diadem,
Hath power to burn, and blaze,
And charm th’ enchanted gaze,
Like those fair jewels in the rays
Of that immortal light
Whereof the mortal eye bears not the sight,
But whose white glory the Archangels praise.

‘My love, now lend thine ear and listen
While, like the Patmian, I declare
How those twelve jewels glisten,
And what the names they bear.

‘The first, a jasper,—which in Ispahan
Is called ‘a diamond in the speech of man;
The next, a sapphire,—whose celestial blue
Gives the Tyrrhenian waves their hue;
The third, that Chalcedonian stone
Which men no longer find,

¹ In the old diamond-mines, whenever a slave found a diamond of a certain size and value he was rewarded with his immediate emancipation.

Yet once was known
In that old City of the Blind¹
Which dust of deserts since hath overblown ;
The fourth, an emerald,—glittering green
As when, upon an olive's rind,
A drop of dew is seen ;
The fifth, a sard,—that stone of flesh
That ever bleeds afresh,
And stands for Calvary's blood-red sign ;
The sixth, a ruby,—set to shine
Like the ensanguined wine
That filled the Holy Grail² ;
The seventh a chrysolite,—
So golden bright
It makes Aurora pale ;
The eighth, a beryl,—sparkling white,
Like moonlit frost,

¹ Different reasons are given why ancient Chalcedon was called the City of the Blind : one is, that it was founded by a colony of blind men—a notion which is sufficiently refuted by its own absurdity : another is that the settlers, though not literally, were metaphorically blind, because they heedlessly chose a bad situation, when, if they had kept their eyes open, they could not have failed to see (and to choose) the neighbouring and more beautiful spot that was afterward occupied by Constantinople.

² The Holy Grail, or Sangrael, was the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper. Joseph of Arimathea, on the day of the Crucifixion, filled this cup with blood which flowed from his Master's wounds. The relic, after being thus filled, was stolen. The thieves, it is said, were exasperated Jews. After forty-two years, according to Christian tradition, Christ appeared to Joseph, and restored to him the cup. Joseph then carried it to Glastonbury in England, whence it was again spirited away, and was made the object of a quest by some of the Knights of the Round Table. The term Sangrael is from *Sanguis Realis*, or real blood.

As seen by hunters who, at night,
 Mount Caucasus have crossed ;
 The ninth, a topaz,—hazel-eyed
 Like Lilith¹, Adam's earlier bride
 Whom first he loved and lost
 Ere Eve was moulded from his side ;
 The tenth, a chrysoprase,—
 Flashing with yellow rays,
 Up, down, a thousand ways,
 Through all that region wide ;
 Th' eleventh, a jacinth,—fairer than if dyed
 By sun and wind
 With colours of that blossom, lush and pied,
 With which its name is twinned ;
 The twelfth, an amethyst,—whose font of fire
 Casts forth a purple jet
 More orient than the East,—
 As if the day should rise, but not to set,
 And the red dawn, with all its gay adorning,
 Should linger on in one immortal morning² !

¹ The Kabála has a myth, that before the creation of Eve, Adam had a wife named Lilith.

² The Scriptural catalogue of the twelve stones (Rev. xxi. 19, 20) is as follows : ' The first foundation was jasper ; the second, sapphire ; the third, a chalcedony ; the fourth, an emerald ; the fifth, sardonyx ; the sixth, sardius ; the seventh, chrysolite ; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, a topaz ; the tenth, a chrysoprasus ; the eleventh, a jacinth ; the twelfth, an amethyst.'

In this list, the jasper is the diamond ; the sardonyx is the sard, or oriental carnelian (from *Carneus*, or raw flesh) ; the sardius is the ruby ; the beryl is possibly the turquoise ; while the jacinth is etymologically the same as the hyacinth (just as a *gem* is an original word for a flower).

'O fair that City is to see,
Which lureth thee and me!
It is arrayed in bride's attire!
It celebrates the marriage-feast!
It satisfies the soul's desire!
With strength declined, yet faith increased,
We thitherward aspire!

'As he whose way, through briers and weeds,
To royal Shiraz leads,
(Where the rose-gardens are¹)
May guess his nearness from afar,
As soon as he espies,—
With gladdened eyes,—
That towering, that enchanted tree
Which, never by a zephyr stirred,
Nor rustled by a fluttering bird,
Yet, by its own sweet action free,
Swings in that breathless air of balm,
And, in a perfect calm,
Bends its high top in courtesy,
And, with a gracious nod,
Salutes each passing pilgrim-band
To bid them welcome to the land;—

'So in the Paradise of God,
The Tree of Life, with greener plume,
Unearthly in its bloom,
Already waves its signal-bough,
And, like a beckoning hand,

¹ The rose-gardens of Shiraz were so famous in Persia that the poems and songs of Sadi (who lived in that city) were called the Gulistan, or the Rose-Garden.

Which we, beholding, understand,
Invites us thither now!

‘To this celestial welcome, what reply
Make thou and I?

‘Ah, though the rapturous vision
Allures us to a Land Elysian,
Yet agéd are our feet, and slow,
And not in haste to go.

‘Life still hath many joys to give,
Whereof the sweetest is—to live!

‘Then fear we death? Not so!
Or do we tremble? No!
Nor do we even grieve!
And yet a gentle sigh we heave,
And unto Him Who fixes fate,—
Without Whose sovereign leave,
Down-whispered from on high,
Not even the daisy dares to die,—
We, jointly, thou and I,
Implore a little longer date,—
A little term of kind reprieve,—
A little lease till by-and-by!

‘May it be Heaven’s decree,—
Here, now, to thee and me,—
That for a season still
The eye shall not grow dim;
That for a few more days
The ear shall not yet cease to hear the hymn
Which the tongue utters to His praise;
That for a little while

The heart faint not, nor fail;
For even the wintry sun is bright,
And cheering to our aged sight;
Yea, though the frosts prevail,
Yet even the icy air,
The frozen plain, the leafless wood
Still keep the earth so fresh and fair
That God Himself has called it good!

'O final Summoner of the Soul!
Grant, of Thy pitying grace,
That for a little longer space
The pitcher at the fountain's rim
Be shattered not, but still kept whole,—
Still overflowing at the brim!
If but a year, if but a day,
Thy lifted hand, O stay!
Loose Thou not yet, O Lord,
The silver cord!
Break Thou not yet the golden bowl¹!

—Thus, garrulous, the aged pair
Sat in their chimney-nook,
With hearts half glad and half afraid;
And while the fire-light flickered there,
They talked and laughed—they wept and prayed;
Until, with weary, wistful look,
They saw the embers fade,—
And, darkly through the wintry air,
Came nightfall and the shade!

¹ 'Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain.' Eccles. xii. 6.

V.

‘Thou and I!’

The voice no longer said;
But two white stones, instead,
Above the twain, long dead,
Still utter, each to each,
The same familiar speech,
‘Thou and I!’

Not spoken to the passer-by,
But just as if, beneath the grass,
Deep underfoot of all who pass,
The sleeping dust would wake to say,
Each to its fellow-clay,
Each in the same old way,
‘Thou and I!’

And each to either should reply,—
(Tomb murmuring unto tomb,—
Stone answering unto stone,
Yet not with sound of human moan,
Nor breath of mortal sigh,
But voiceless as the dead’s dumb cry)—
‘Thou and I!’

And whosoever draweth nigh
With reverent feet and holy fear,
And tarrieth for a space—
The letters on the stone to trace,
Or drop a tender tear,
Shall (if he have an ear to hear,
And know the language of the place)
Hear other whisperings to and fro,
Half-muffled in the dust below;

Not said in words, nor sounded clear,
But, though all mystic to the ear,
Yet to the heart all plain ;—
A silent speech by sign and token,
More tender than by any language spoken ;—
At first the old refrain —
'Thou and I !'—
Then, by and by,
This faintly-added strain :—
'We twain,
As here we rest within the gloom,
Are sundered not, but still remain
Twain one,
As when we walked together in the sun !
Love, lying in its bed,
Is not unwed,
But newly-nuptialled—groom and bride
For ever side by side—
As if the faithful dead
Had never died !
The spirit and the body part,
Yet love abideth, heart to heart.
'O silent comrade of my rest,
With hands here crossed upon thy breast,
Have I forgotten who thou art ?
O marble brow,
Here pillowed next to mine,
Have I not guessed,
By many a certain sign,
Who lieth near me in that grave of thine ?
'For though above us, green and high,
The yew-trees grow,

And churchyard ravens fly,
And mourners come and go,
Yet thou and I,
Who dust to dust lie here below,
Still one another know!
Yea, thee I know—it still is thou;
And me thou know'st—it still is I;
True lovers once, true lovers now!—
The same old vow,
The same old thrill,
The same old love between us still!

'The gloomy grave hath frosts that kill,
But love is safe from all their chill!

'Love's flame—
Consuming, unconsumed—
In hearts that beat, or hearts entombed—
Is fed by life and death the same!

'Love's spark
Is brightest when love's final house is dark!

'Love's shroud—
That wraps its bosom round—
Must crumble in the charnel-ground,
Till all the long white winding-sheet
Shall drop to dust from head to feet;
But love's strong cord,
Th' eternal tie,
Th' immortal bond that binds
Love's twain immortal minds;—
This silken knot
Shall never rot—

Nor moulder in the mouldy mound—
 Nor mildew—nor decay—
 Nor fall apart—nor drop away—
 Nor ever be unbound!

'Love's dust,
 Whatever grave it fill,
 Though buried deep, is deathless still!
 Love hath no death, and cannot die!
 This love is ours, as here we lie,—
 Thou and I!'



THE CHANT CELESTIAL.

'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter: therefore, ye soft pipes, play on.'

KEATS, *Ode to a Grecian Urn.*

I.

KING Arthur, in his palace of Pendrágon,
 Sat feasting with his princes, late and long,
 And to his oldest minstrel sent a flagon—
 To fire his aged fancy to a song.

II.

Uprose the hoary harper, blind and saintly,
 Whose ninety-wintered beard besnowed his breast,
 Who, harping with his palsied fingers faintly,
 Thus sang (though softly) at the King's behest:

III.

‘Give ear, whoever sorrows or rejoices,
While I, too old for either mirth or tears,
Shall rhyme of those celestial harps and voices
That chant the fabled Music of the Spheres.

IV.

‘I sing of worlds before the earth was present,—
A song of times ere Time itself began,—
Before the silvery moon had lit her crescent,
Or sun his fire, or lived a mortal man.

V.

‘The primal universe had chaos in it,
For night with triple darkness wrapt it round,
Nor was there greenening leaf, nor singing linnet,
Nor any other cheering sight, nor sound.

VI.

‘Then, while the mighty mists were still concealing
The yet unmoulded world where now we dwell,
God ordered heavenly music to go pealing
Round its dead orb—to wake it with a spell.

VII.

‘Within a shining cloud that veiled their faces
Ten thousand seraphs, each with harp in hand,
Flew chanting through those dim and empty spaces
That afterward were filled with sea and land.

VIII.

‘The stars that on the morning of creation
Together sang to Him Who made them fair,
First caught their canticle of adoration
From this immortal murmur in the air.

IX.

'Before the mountains had their high upheaval.
Before the caverns of the deep were laid.
This was Creation's harmony primaeval,—
The rhythm to which the whirling world was made.

X.

'Sweet herald of the will of the Creator,
It timed the birth of Nature, then unborn;
And, warbling through the zodiac and equator,
It woke the seasons, and led forth the morn.

XI.

'From pole to pole, from Capricorn to Cancer,
Things lifeless into life it did beguile,
Till marble Memnon heard it and made answer,
And stony Sphinx retold it to the Nile.

XII.

'The rustling boughs of Lebanon, gigantic,
Rehearsed it to the tiniest herbs that grew;—
And from the swelling wave of the Atlantic
It quavered to the trembling drop of dew.

XIII.

'When round the Ark the Deluge rose, appalling,—
From this melodious cloud a harp was hurled
Whose seven immortal strings took fire in falling,
And gave the Rainbow to a stormy world.

XIV.

'A soaring Lark, that heard the heavenly singing,
Brought down the song to all his fellow-throats,—
Till every greenwood now is ever ringing
With lowly pipings of those lofty notes.

XV.

‘Beneath a myrtle sat a Poet, sighing,
Because he could not tune his jangled lyre,
Who heard the wondrous chant above him flying,
And chorded to it each rebellious wire.

XVI.

‘So lucent was the cloud,—so sky-adorning,—
That when it crossed Olympus on its way,
It lent Aurora light to flush the morning,
And gave Apollo gold to gild the day.

XVII.

‘It flashed the sparkle which the moon saw glancing
Upon the waters of Castalia’s fount,
And lent the Muses music for their dancing
Until they vanished from their vernal mount.

XVIII.

‘From India’s sacred coast of Coromandel
To Mecca’s hallowed temple went the sound,
Till he who listened laid aside his sandal,
And flung him prostrate on the holy ground.

XIX.

‘It blew a trumpet over Sinai’s mountain,
That woke an earthquake by its awful tone,—
While he smote the rock and loosed the fountain
Received the Tables Twain of graven stone.

XX.

‘Its harps were echoed by the harp of Zion,
That prophesied of nations reconciled,
And of the peaceful day when Lamb and Lion
Shall twain be yoked together by a Child.

XXI.

'The Shepherds heard it, who by night were tending
Their sleepy sheep on Bethlehem's holy hill,
To whose low summit came the cloud descending,
With all its Angels, chanting, Peace!—good-will!

XXII.

'This was the cloud beneath whose pealing thunders
The Temple reeled, the Tombs flew open wide,
And all the day grew dark with signs and wonders
When Calvary's Cross upbore the Crucified!'

XXIII.

[Here paused the bard; and at the Name All Holy,
The king and princes, to the King of Kings,
Each crossed his breast, and bowed in reverence lowly,—
The bard the lowliest,—and resumed the strings:]

XXIV.

'In elder time, from out this cloud supernal,
Those guilty seraphs who did Heaven assault
Were headlong plunged to the abyss infernal,
And discord vanished out of Heaven's blue vault.

XXV.

'But discord on the Earth is ever raging,
For human hate is quenchless in its flame;
Yet, high above the wars that men are waging,
The Angels still go singing all the same!

XXVI.

'Above the bedlam world—but never near it—
Their floating chant is carolled through the sky,
So faint and far that mortals hardly hear it,
Yet he who hearkens, hears it by and by.

XXVII.

‘It smites the air with such a soft vibration
That some who hear it think it not a sound,
But fancy it their spirits’ own pulsation
That thrills the sense with ecstasy profound.

XXVIII.

‘It chimes to deserts and dim wildernesses,
In swift pursuit where wandering feet have trod ;
And whom it overtakes, it sweetly blesses,—
And fills the Pilgrim with the peace of God.

XXIX.

‘It chanteth to the Sailor on the ocean,
And in the tempest gives his soul a calm ;
It seeks the Hermit, rapt in his devotion,
And trills and trembles in his prayer and psalm.

XXX.

‘Beyond all melody of pipe or tabor
When merry maidens dance with happy men,
It glads the groaning Captive at his labour,
And cheers the Exile, hunted to his den.

XXXI.

‘To all who weep at bedsides of the dying,
To all who kiss their dead and lay them low,
To all the sorrowing world, with all its sighing,—
It chants a solace greater than the woe.

XXXII.

‘O cloud-wrapt cloud, hid in the heights Elysian,
If waking eyes may not behold thy gleams,
Let loose Thy Angels, as in Jacob’s Vision,
To steal upon our sleeping world in dreams !

XXXIII.

'Fulfil to men the sweet prophetic story
Of Him foretold by all the holy seers!—
Of Him Whose Chariot is a Cloud of Glory!—
Of Him Who comes to reign a thousand years!

XXXIV.

'O harbinger of His delayed Appearing!—
For Whom we cry, How long, O God, how long!—
I see, though blind, a vision of thy nearing!—
I hail thee, harp for harp, and song for song!'

XXXV.

—So sang the minstrel till his strength was ended;
And when his song was done, he gasped for breath—
Uprolled his eyes to heaven—his palms extended—
And sank to the immortal calm of death.

XXXVI.

King Arthur bade the princes of his table
Uplift and lay thereon the fallen seer,
And on his bosom spread a pall of sable,—
Till, black amid the banquet, was a bier.

XXXVII.

Not mortal like the bard,—his song, undying,
Survives the singer and his broken lyre,—
For, round the earth the Angels, ever flying,
Keep chanting it with their Celestial Choir.



THE GRAVE ON THE PRAIRIE.

I GALLOPED once with horse and hound
Across the Texan prairie,
Till, on a gentle swell of ground,
I halted by a flowery mound
That bore the name of MARY.

It was not where the living dwelt,
Nor was it yet God's Acre,
But all a lonely, boundless belt,
Where she whose name the letters spelt
Dwelt only with her Maker.

No crumbling wall, nor rotting rail,
Nor palisade of osier,
Remained to show, however frail,
It once had girt the sacred pale,
Or guarded the enclosure.

No date was carved of death or birth,
No line of love or honour,
No tribute to departed worth,—
Yet she who mouldered, earth to earth,
Had all earth's pomp upon her.

For prairie-flowers, for many a mile,
In every gay direction
Shook in the wind, and all the while
Kept rendering back the sun his smile,
And twinkling in reflection.

The cactus¹ flaunted far and near
His blossom red and splendid,
Which nibbling sheep approached with fear,
Half daunted by the spiny spear
With which it was defended.

Beneath a live-oak, green and high,
The humble grave was shaded ;—
So, halting there, my horse and I
Sought refuge from the burning sky;
For now we both were jaded.

The hanging moss²—with mournful grace
Each lofty limb festooning—
Lent funeral garlands to the place,—
Where, tarrying from my morning chase,
I took my hour of nooning.

The hounds, all panting from their quest,
I leashed with easy fetter,
And sat me by the dead to rest ;
For not so good is life at best,
But that the grave is better.

¹ Millions of these grotesque and bristling plants are scattered over the Lone Star state. Sometimes a cluster measures a hundred feet in circumference—reaching to the height of a man's head on horseback, or even higher.

² Gigantic live-oak trees, each hung with trailing grey moss, are among the conspicuous objects which strike the eye of a traveller in the southern portions of the United States.

So while the roebuck joined his herd
In peace from my pursuing,
I from the gravestone never stirred :
And Death seemed but a hope deferred,—
Sure of a bright renewing.

No frightened plover whirred his wing ;
No startled rabbit bounded ;
And not a bird made bold to sing ;
Nor in the grass a creeping thing
His chirping trumpet sounded.

No wanderer ever went that way
Except some cattle-ranger¹,
Or Indian of a former day,
Or settler discontent to stay, .
Or (like myself) some stranger.

Yet there, at rest, lay one who came,
Too weary for returning,—
Who bore, in death, that deathless name
To which the Church's altar-flame
Is round the world kept burning.

Now *who* was she whose name alone
Thus stopt me as I wandered?—
Whose life, unstoried on the stone,
Whose fortune, all untold, unknown,
I vaguely guessed and pondered.

¹ It is no uncommon thing in Texas for a man to own ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand head of cattle; and the herdsmen who tend these immense herds range on horseback over hundreds of miles of wild prairie.

The fate with which I grew beguiled
Eluded my endeavour ;
For was she babe ?—or romping child ?—
Or madcap maiden, free and wild,
Now fallen asleep for ever ?

Or was she one of wedded twain,
Beloved and yet forsaken ?—
Whom, lonely in the flowery plain,
The westward-toiling wagon-train
Had left,—for God had taken ?

Or was it age that bade her bow,
Till,—old and faint and failing,—
She died a dame of wrinkled brow,
For whom th' unfurrowed prairie now
Her furrowed face was veiling ?

I only know that, short or long,
Her life was with the humble,
Yet I enroll it with the throng
Of all who proudly live in song
When brass and marble crumble.

O Mary, like thy vernal clime
Whose year is un-Decembered¹,—
For ever blooming in its prime,—
So, never-withering be the rhyme
That keeps thy name remembered !

¹ The table-lands of Texas may be said to have an almost perpetual spring, and the author has seen Texan settlers, possessing comfortable cabins, and yet preferring to sleep out of doors in winter, around a fire on the open prairie.

—And what of *him* who, with his spade,
Cleft open turf and gravel,
And dug the grave where she was laid,—
And heaped the hill, and knelt and prayed,—
And joined his train of travel?

Carved rudely on the slab of slate,
The letters looked ungainly;—
Yet though the carver¹ could not wait
To linger over day and date,
He told his anguish plainly.

O sorrow, keener than the knife
That sculptured there its story,—
O woe that wept for child or wife!—
O mortal pain!—like human life
Ye too are transitory!

For God, in mercy to mankind,
Endows the heart with feeling,
Yet lodges reason in the mind,
That man may have the wit to find
For every hurt a healing.

The lightnings on the ocean play,
And shoot their bolts of thunder,
And fleets are wrecked (the tidings say)—
Yet still the world goes on its way
As if no ship went under.

The chieftain falls,—and all his clan,
Whom he had died defending,
Forget him for some lordlier man,—
Whose glory, too, is but a span,
And glimmers to an ending.

The bridegroom drops,—and day and night,
With sorrow unexceeded,
The bride bewails her widowed plight,—
Until, with heavy heart grown light,
She is at last unweeded.

The heart, however great its grief,
Or dearly this be cherished,
Or clung to for a season brief,
Soon sheds it like a loosened leaf
That by the frost hath perished.

The bleeding heart survives the blow,
The pulses cease their raging,
The fever cools,—and so we know,
There never comes a human woe
But brings its own assuaging.

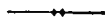
So what if Mary in the mould,
With carven stone above her,
Was wept when first her clay grew cold,
And mourned with sorrow manifold
By wedded lord or lover?—

Shall then a carping world upbraid
And call him hollow-hearted,
Or false to Mary's sacred shade,
If he shall woo another maid,
And tie the cord that parted?

There is a time for tears,—but then
There comes a truce to sorrow:
It is the manly way of men:
They love, and lose, and love agen,
And wed anew to-morrow.

—I lay at rest an hour or more,
But when the hounds, long hampered,
Began to whimper, and implore
To hunt the roebuck as before,—
I loosed them, and they scampered.

Hard after them, with leap and prance,
I galloped down the prairie,—
And thought how odd a circumstance
That I, a stranger, was perchance
Sole mourner left for Mary!



*TOLL, ROLAND, TOLL!*¹

(Suggested by President Lincoln's First Call for Volunteers.)

I.

HIGH in the Belfry Tower—
At the dead hour
Of darkest night—
The great bell Roland spoke;—
And all who slept in Ghent awoke!
What meant the thunder-stroke?
Why trembled wife and maid—
Frozen with fright?
Why caught each man his blade?

¹ The famous bell Roland of Ghent (as Motley relates) was an object of great affection to the citizens, because it rang to arm them when Liberty was in danger.

Why echoed every street
With tramp of thronging feet,
All flying to the City's wall ?
It was the warning call
That Freedom stood in peril of a foe !
And not alone the men of might
Rushed forth to join the throng :
Even the sick, though lying low,
Sprang up, and begged to go :
The weak grew in an instant strong—
The timid, bold—
Whenever Roland tolled,
For every hand a sword could hold,
And every arm could bend a bow !
So acted men
Like patriots then—
Three hundred years ago !

II.

Toll, Roland, toll !
—Bell never yet was hung,
Between whose lips there swung
A grander Tongue !
If men be patriots still,
At thy first sound
True hearts will bound,
Great souls will thrill !
Then toll, and let thy test
Try every breast,
Till every loyal spirit stand confessed !

III.

Toll, Roland, toll!
—Not in thy Belfry Tower!
Not at the midnight hour!
Not from the River Scheldt to Zuyder Zee!
But here!—this side the sea!—
Toll here, in broad bright day!
For not by night awaits
A foe without the gates,
But perjured friends within betray,
Who do the deed at noon!
Toll, Roland, toll!
Thy sound is not too soon!
To arms! Ring out the Leader's call!
Toll, Roland, toll!
Till cottager from cottage-wall
Snatch pouch, and powder-horn, and gun—
The heritage of sire to son
Ere half of Freedom's work was done!—
Toll, Roland, toll!
Till swords from scabbards leap!
Toll, Roland, toll!
What tears can widows weep
Less bitter than when brave men fall?
Toll, Roland, toll!
In shadowed hut and hall
Shall lie the soldier's pall,
And hearts shall break while graves are filled!
Amen! So God hath willed!
And may His grace anoint us all!

IV.

Toll, Roland, toll!
—The Dragon on thy tower
Stands sentry to this hour;
And Freedom now is safe in Ghent;
And merrier bells now ring;
And in the land's serene content
Men shout, 'God save the King!'—
Until the skies are rent!
Amen! So let it be!
A kingly king is he
Who keeps his people free!
Toll, Roland, toll!
Ring out across the sea!
No longer They, but We
Have now such need of thee!
Toll, Roland, toll!
Nor ever let thy throat
Keep back its warning note
Till Freedom's perils be outbraved!
Toll, Roland, toll!—
Till Freedom's flag, wherever waved,
Shall shadow not a man enslaved!
Toll, Roland, toll!—
From Northern lake to Southern strand!
Toll, Roland, toll!
Till friend and foe, at thy command,
Shall clasp once more each other's hand,
And shout, one-voiced, 'God save the land!'
And love the land that God hath saved!
Toll, Roland, toll!

April 16, 1861.

THE FLY:

A NURSERY SONG¹.

I.

BABY Bye,
Here's a Fly:
Let us watch him, you and I.
How he crawls
Up the walls—
Yet he never falls!
I believe, with those six legs,
You and I could walk on eggs!
There he goes,
On his toes,
Tickling Baby's nose!

II.

Spots of red
Dot his head:
Rainbows on his wings are spread!
That small speck
Is his neck:
See him nod and beck!
I can show you, if you choose,
Where to look to find his shoes:
Three small pairs
Made of hairs—
These he always wears.

¹ To the tune of 'Lightly Row.'

III.

Black and brown
Is his gown :
He can wear it upside down !
It is laced
Round his waist :
I admire his taste !
Pretty as his clothes are made,
He will spoil them, I'm afraid,
If to-night
He gets sight
Of the candle-light.

IV.

In the sun
Webs are spun :
What if he gets into one !
When it rains
He complains
On the window-panes !
Tongues to talk have you and I :
God has given the little Fly
No such things :
So he sings
With his buzzing wings.

V.

He can eat
Bread and meat :
See his mouth between his feet !
On his back
Hangs a sack
Like a pedlar's pack :

Does the Baby understand ?
Then the Fly shall kiss her hand !
Put a crumb
On her thumb :
Maybe he will come !

VI.

Round and round,
On the ground,
On the ceiling he is found.
Catch him ? No :
Let him go :
Never hurt him so !
Now you see his wings of silk
Drabbled in the Baby's milk !
Fie, oh fie !
Foolish Fly !
How will he get dry ?

VII.

All wet flies
Twist their thighs :
So they wipe their heads and eyes !
Cats, you know,
Wash just so :
Then their whiskers grow !
Flies have hair too short to comb !
Flies go barehead out from home !
But the Gnat
Wears a hat :
Do you laugh at that ?

VIII.

Flies can see
 More than we—
 So how bright their eyes must be !
 Little Fly,
 Mind your eye—
 Spiders are near by !
 Now a secret let me tell :
 Spiders will not treat you well !
 So I say,
 Heed your way !
 Little Fly, good day !

*THE MYSTERY OF NATURE.*

I.

THE works of God are fair for nought
 Unless our eyes in seeing,
 See, hidden in the thing, the thought
 That animates its being.

II.

The outward form is not the whole,
 But every part is moulded
 To image forth an inward soul
 That dimly is unfolded.

III.

The shadow, pictured in the lake
By every tree that trembles,
Is cast for more than just the sake
Of that which it resembles.

IV.

The dew falls nightly, not alone
Because the meadows need it,
But hath an errand of its own
To human souls that heed it.

V.

The stars are lighted in the skies
Not merely for their shining,
But, like the looks of loving eyes,
Have meanings worth divining.

VI.

The waves that moan along the shore,
The winds that sigh in blowing,
Are sent to teach a mystic lore
Which men are wise in knowing.

VII.

The clouds around the mountain-peak,
The rivers in their winding,
Have secrets which, to all who seek,
Are precious in the finding.

VIII.

Thus Nature dwells within our reach,
But, though we stand so near her,
We still interpret half her speech
With ears too dull to hear her.

IX.

Whoever at the coarsest sound
Still listens for the finest,
Shall hear the noisy world go round
To music the divinest.

X.

Whoever yearns to see aright,
Because his heart is tender,
Shall catch a glimpse of heavenly light
In every earthly splendour.

XI.

So, since the universe began,
And till it shall be ended,
The soul of Nature, soul of Man,
And soul of God are blended!



THE KING'S RING.

I.

ONCE in Persia reigned a King
Who, upon his signet-ring,
Graved a maxim true and wise,
Which, if held before his eyes,
Gave him counsel, at a glance,
Fit for every change or chance :
Solemn words, and these are they :
' Even this shall pass away ! '

II.

Trains of camels through the sand
Brought him gems from Samarcand ;
Fleets of galleys through the seas
Brought him pearls to rival these ;
But he reckoned not as gain
Treasures of the mine or main :
' What is wealth ? ' the King would say,—
' Even this shall pass away ! '

III.

In the revels of his court,
At the zenith of the sport,
When the palms of all his guests
Burned with clapping at his jests,
He, amid his figs and wine,
Cried, ' O loving friends of mine,
Pleasure comes, but not to stay :
Even this shall pass away ! '

IV.

Lady fairest ever seen
Was the bride he crowned his Queen.
Pillowed on his marriage-bed,
Whispering to his soul, he said,
'Though a bridegroom never prest
Dearer bosom to his breast,
Mortal flesh must come to clay:
Even this shall pass away!'

V.

Fighting on a furious field,
Once a javelin pierced his shield.
Soldiers with a loud lament
Bore him bleeding to his tent.
Groaning from his tortured side.
'Pain is hard to bear,' he cried,
'But with patience, day by day,
Even this shall pass away!'

VI.

Towering in the public square
Twenty cubits in the air
Rose his statue carved in stone.
Then the King, disguised, unknown,
Gazing at his sculptured name,
Asked himself, 'And what is Fame?
Fame is but a slow decay:
Even this shall pass away!'

VII.

Struck with palsy, sere and old,
Waiting at the Gates of Gold,

Spake he with his dying breath,
‘Life is done, and what is Death?’
Then, in answer to the King,
Lo, the legend on his ring
Seemed to mock at Death, and say—
‘Even this shall pass away!’

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

‘Are they not all ministering spirits?’

I.

I LEANED upon a burial urn,
And thought how life is but a day,
And how the nations, each in turn,
Have lived and passed away.

II.

The earth is peopled with the dead,
Who live agen in deathless hosts,
And come and go with noiseless tread—
A universe of ghosts.

III.

They follow after flying ships,
They flicker through the City’s marts,
They hear the cry of human lips—
The beat of human hearts.

IV.

They linger not around their tombs,
But far from churchyards keep aloof,
And dwell in old familiar rooms
Beneath the household roof.

V.

They waken men at morning light,
They cheer them in their daily care,
They bring a weary world at night
To bend the knee in prayer.

VI.

Their errand is of God assigned
To comfort sorrow till it cease,
For in the dark and troubled mind
They light the lamp of peace.

VII.

There is a language, whispered low,
Whereby to mortal ears they speak,—
To which we answer by a glow
That kindles in the cheek.

VIII.

Dear shadows, fairer than the day,
With heavenly light they wrap us round,
Wherein we walk a gilded way,
And over holy ground!

IX.

O what a wondrous life is theirs!—
To fling away the mortal frame
Yet keep the human loves, and cares,
And yearnings still the same!

X.

O what a wondrous life is ours!—
To dwell within this earthly range,
Yet parley with the heavenly powers—
Two worlds in interchange!

XI.

O balm of grief!—to understand
That whom our eyes behold no more
Still clasp us with as true a hand
As in the flesh before.

XII.

No longer in a gloom profound
Let Memory, like a mourner craped,
Sit weeping by an empty mound
Whose captive hath escaped.

XIII.

So, turning from the burial urn,
I thought how life has double worth
If men be wise enough to learn
That heaven is on the earth.



THE STRANGE PREACHER OF PADUA.

A PADUAN Carmelite lay deathly sick,
And cried, 'O God, if I should die to-day
(Who thought to preach to-morrow), choose Thee out,
To fill my place, a worthier monk than I;
But let him be no Paduan; send instead
A voice unknown; that when the people hear
A stranger in my pulpit, they perchance
Will pay to *him* a greater heed than they
Have paid to *me*, whom they have heard too much,
Heeding too little! Great will be the throng:
So lend him for his task a tongue of fire,
And measure to him for his morning hour
The grace of Heaven to snatch the town from Hell!'

Next day at matins, while a thousand eyes
In the dim light of San Antonio's church
Were gazing at the shaft of fluted stone
To which (as when a swallow builds her nest
Against a beam) the pulpit clung, uprose
A monk—a stranger to them all—who crossed
Himself and said, 'The preacher whom you love,
And whom you hither crowd in hope to hear,
Shall speak to you no more on earth—for hence,
This very morn, at cockcrow, he was called
By a celestial summons, and hath left
His corpse behind him in his mouldy cell,
And upward mounted to his crown in Heaven!
Be warned, O Paduans, turn and flee from Hell!'

Beginning thus, the stranger then went on,
And preached an unctuous sermon to the flock,

Who craned their necks to listen, yet who paled
At hearing; for the preacher, as he passed
From point to point, paused for a moment at
Each damning point, to thunder the refrain—
'Be warned, O Paduans, turn and flee from Hell!'

And thus—as with a tongue of fire indeed!—
He stung their cheeks to scarlet, like their sins.

In anguish for their souls, some knelt and prayed;
Some uttered groans; some shivered, as with frost;
Each sinner felt an earthquake in his breast;
And when the stranger finished his discourse,
The choir were thick of-throat—too choked to sing;
The organ blew no breath through any pipe—
The player's hands could only prop his brows!

Then stept the silent people from the church,
As mourners mutely scatter from a tomb;
Or, if they whispered, it was but to say—
'Oh when has this thrice-wicked city heard
Such preaching since Savonaróla's day!'

Down from his pulpit, with his frock still on,
And with his triumph sparkling in his eyes,
The stranger (with some monks of Carmel, whom
He chose for comrades) sauntered out beyond
The city's gate—their bare feet in the grass,
Their bare heads shaded by the orange-trees,
Their voices answering to the lark's with song.

Then happened a thing strange—for when, oh when,
In this strange world, will signs and wonders cease?

Now close behind the preacher and his dupes,
There followed barefoot, staggering, panting, pale,
Scarce half alive, the priest they left for dead!—
Who, having learned the marvel of the morn,
Sprang out of bed, pursued the stranger, spied
A cloven-foot beneath his gown, and cried
With a shrill voice that hushed their happy hymns,
'Ye fools, I swear to you by Heaven above,
This preacher is the Devil from below!'

White as their scapulars, the Carmelites
Stood all aghast! And first they fixt their eyes
On the accuser, then on the accused—
Two shapes as if of mortal men, and yet
One risen out of Death, one out of Hell!

With mildewed spots and warts the preacher's face
Turned all at once a toad's—and then agen
A monk's—and thus with loathsome interchange
Now seemed the one, and now the other, till—
In righteous wrath—the sick and fevered friar
Cried out, 'O enemy of God and man,
Before I strike thee with this Crucifix,
And beat thee down into the limbo of
The damned,—first tell us why thou warnest men
From Hell, since thou art keen to lure them in?

The Devil quailed! He dreaded to disclose
The chief and subtlest secret of his art!
But being stricken with the Holy Rood
(The punishment that makes him cringe the most!)
He said, 'I warn men of their sins that when,—
Once warned,—they sin agen (as straight they do)

Their double guilt shall bring them double doom ;
For at the Judgement I shall say, "O Judge,
The souls that charged their fall to trick of mine
Speak shameless lies!—for, tempting not, I warned ;
And, snaring not, I pointed out the snare ;
And, seeing them upon the burning brink,
With tears I bade them back, yet down they plunged !
Condemn them now to me, and to the flame !""

So saying, as a diver cleaves the sea,
He, diving, cleft the earth, and sank to Hell !

With arms uplifted toward the city's walls,
'O Paduans,' cried the sick and pallid friar—
With hardly breath to speak—'what tears mine eyes
Have wasted, weeping for your souls not saved !'

Uprose he then sublime of stature, clenched
His hands, gave up the ghost, and fell!—a corpse
indeed !

All Padua, when it heard the tale, stood dumb !
No man but vowed to live a whiter life !
O fickle human heart ! How oft its brittle vows
Are dashed to pieces on its stony self !
The sinners sinned afresh ! The Devil went
Not back to San Antonio's church ! No need !
For San Antonio's church went back to him !



THE TRUE CHURCH.

I.

I WANDERED on a Sabbath day,
And met a Pilgrim on my way.

Quoth I, 'Oh aid me in my search—
I seek to find the One True Church.'

Said he, 'Go search the world around—
The One True Church is never found:

'But yonder, with an ivied wall,
You find the falsest church of all!—

'For look! what image do you see?
A ghastly Christ upon His Tree!—

'How can the Lord be truly shown
In painted wood or carven stone?'

Then fearing he had told me wrong,
Quoth I, 'Behold the gathering throng!'

He answered, 'If a church be true,
It hath not many, but a few.'

'But see,' said I, 'they humbly bow,
And cross themselves on breast and brow.'

'A cross so light to bear,' he cried,
'Is not of Christ the Crucified.'

We entered, and with holy awe
I gazed about me, and I saw

Faint candles by the daylight dimmed,
As if by foolish virgins trimmed ;

Fair statues of the saints, as white
As now their robes are, in God's light ;

Stained windows, casting down a beam
Like Jacob's ladder in the dream.

The Pilgrim gazed from floor to roof,
And frowned, and uttered this reproof :

'Alas, who is it understands
God's temple is not made with hands !'

II.

Then faring forth, while yet the dew
Flashed from our feet in trailing through,

We came upon a church whose dome
Upheld a cross, but not for Rome.

No candle-lights were burning there,
Nor smell of incense filled the air.

We did not enter as before,
But peeped within the open door.

The solemn service in the fane
Appeared to give the Pilgrim pain.

'Do prayers,' he asked, 'the more avail
If offered at an altar-rail ?

'Does water sprinkled from a bowl
Wash any sin from any soul ?

'Or can the bread and wine, forsooth,
Inspire the tongue to tell the truth?'

Just then, upon a maple spray,
Two orioles perched and piped a lay,—

Until the gold beneath their throats
Shook molten in their mellow notes.

Resounding from the church a psalm
Rolled, quivering, through the outer calm.

'Both choirs,' said I, 'are in accord,
For both give praises to the Lord.'

'The birds,' he answered, 'chant a song
Without a note of sin or wrong:

'The church's anthem is a strain
Of human guilt and mortal pain.'

The orioles and the organ ceased,
And in the pulpit rose the priest.

The Pilgrim whispered in my ear,
'It profits not to tarry here.'

'He speaks no error,' answered I;
'He teaches that the living die;

'The dead arise; and both are true;
Both wholesome doctrines; neither new.'

The Pilgrim said, 'He strikes a blow
At wrongs of ages long ago,

'But covers with a shielding phrase
The living sins of present days!

'Now cursed be the lips that speak
To spare the strong, yet smite the weak!'

We turned away among the tombs—
A tangled place of briers and blooms.

I spelt the legends on the stones:
It was a place where lay the bones

Of bodies which the rack once brake
In witness for the dear Lord's sake,—

Of ashes gathered from the pyres
Of saints whose souls fled up through fires.

The Pilgrim murmured as we passed,
'So gained they each his crown at last.

'Men lose it now through looking back
To find it at the stake and rack.

'The rack and stake are old with grime—
God's touchstone is the living time.'

III.

We passed where poplars, gaunt and tall,
Let twice their length of shadow fall.

Uprose a meeting-house in view,
Of bleached and weather-beaten hue.

Men plain of garb and pure of heart
Divided church and world apart.

Nor did they vex the silent air
With any sound of hymn or prayer.

God's finger to their lips they pressed,
Till each man kissed it, and was blest.

I asked, 'Is *this* the true church, then?'
He answered, 'Nay, a sect of men :

'And sects, that bar their doors in pride,
Shut God and half his saints outside.

'The gates of Heaven, the Scriptures say,
Stand open wide by night and day!

'Those everlasting doors are free—
Not opened with a church's key!'

IV.

Then far from every church we strayed—
Save Nature's pillared aisles of shade.

The squirrels ran to see us pass,
And God's sweet breath was on the grass.

I challenged all the creeds, and sought
What truth, or lie, or both, they taught.

I asked, 'Had Augustine a fault?'
The Pilgrim gazed at Heaven's high vault,

And answered, 'Can a mortal eye
Contain the sphere of all the sky?'

I said, 'The circle is too wide!'
'God's truth is wider!' he replied,—

'And so, of all the boundless day,
Saint Augustine saw but a ray:

'So Luther, with his burning heart,
Beheld the glory but in part :

'So Calvin, with his eager soul,
Could never comprehend the whole :

'Not Luther, Calvin, Augustine,
Saw visions such as *I* have seen !'

While yet he spake I felt a flame
Go shooting through my quivering frame !

I looked upon his holy brow,
Entreating, 'Tell me, who art THOU?'—

But such a splendour filled the place
I knew it was the Lord's own face !

I was a sinner, and afraid !
I knelt in dust, and thus I prayed :

'O Christ the Lord, end Thou my search,
And lead me to the One True Church !'

He answered (not as man may speak)
'The One True Church thou shalt not seek :

'Seek thou for evermore instead
To find the One True Christ, its Head !'

The Lord then vanished from my sight,
And left me standing in the light.



A LAYMAN'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

AS other men have creeds, so I have mine :

—I keep the holy faith in God, in man,
And in the angels ministrant between.

—I hold to one true church of all true souls ;
Whose churchly seal is neither bread nor wine,
Nor laying on of hands, nor holy oil,
But only the anointing of God's grace.

—I hate all kings, and caste, and rank of birth :
For all the sons of men are sons of God :
Nor limps a beggar but is nobly born :
Nor wears a slave a yoke, nor czar a crown,
That makes him less or more than just a man.

—I love my country and her righteous cause :
So dare I not keep silent of her sin :
And after Freedom, may her bells ring Peace !

—I love one woman with a holy fire,
Whom I revere as priestess of my house :
I stand with wondering awe before my babes
Till they rebuke me to a nobler life :
I keep a faithful friendship with my friend,
Whom loyally I serve before myself :
I lock my lips too close to speak a lie :
I wash my hands too white to touch a bribe :
I owe no man a debt I cannot pay—
Except the love that men should always owe.

—Withal, each day, before the blessed Heaven
I open wide the chambers of my soul
And pray the Holy Ghost to enter in.

—Thus reads the fair confession of my faith,—
So crossed with contradictions by my life,
That now may God forgive the written lie!
Yet still, by help of Him Who helpeth men
To face two worlds, I fear not life nor death!
O Father, lead me by Thy hand! Amen.

1862.



THE SEXTON'S TALE.

SCENE—*An English Churchyard, thirteenth century.*

PERSONS—*A Stranger rambling among the tombs, and an aged Sexton, pointing them out to him, and relating the following narrative.*

I.

A KNIGHT, sir, from the Holy Land
Came back to claim my Lady's hand.
[This grave is his where now we stand.]

II.

Her sire, the Duke, was stern, and said
That she was still too young to wed.
[How thick the leaves are where we tread!]

III.

I was her thrall, and I can swear
That not on earth—I care not where—
Was there another face so fair!

IV.

A maid who knows her father's will,
And weds against it, comes to ill.
[Stand here—the winter wind is chill.]

V.

And yet a woman, sir, I say,
Should be allowed her will and way
In what concerns her wedding-day.

VI.

So when the Duke took helm and lance
And sailed to join a joust in France,
My Lady saw her golden chance.

VII.

If once the holy knot were tied,
Her sire, nor all the world beside,
Could part the bridegroom and the bride.

VIII.

Her plan—a secret most profound—
Was kept from all the gossips round
Until the chimes began to sound.

IX.

Now how it came, I cannot tell,
But never such mishap befell
The ringing of a wedding-bell.

X.

For while the priest was at the prayer,
The Duke—the Devil knows from where—
Burst in upon the married pair!

XI.

One faces winter, though it blows
And frosts one's breath—and so we rose
And faced him, though our pulses froze.

XII.

The Duke had sword and shield and squire;
The Knight was in his wedding-tire;
They fronted, and their eyes flashed fire!

XIII.

Then turned the father to his child
And touched her wedding-ring, and smiled;
Whereat we thought him reconciled!

XIV.

Quoth he, 'My daughter and my son,
Against my will the deed is done;
But twain whom God hath joined are one.

XV.

'Now follow to my castle-hall!
Come old and young! come great and small!
A feast awaiteth one and all!'

XVI.

It was a lie the tyrant told!
His soul was to the Devil sold!
[*Hic jacet*—here's his rotten mould!]

XVII.

Thus cheated forward to their fate,
The lovers reached the castle-gate—
Where, hid behind it, lay in wait

XVIII.

Five henchmen who—like hounds in check,
Yet daring at their master's beck
To grip a lion by the neck—

XIX.

Sprang at the Knight, and girt him round,
And hurled him headlong to the ground,
And held him like a lion bound!

XX.

Outspake the Duke—the double-faced!—
'Thy wife shall be a virgin chaste
And never in thine arms embraced!

XXI.

'This wall shall thee and thine divide,
And make thee bridegroom to a bride
Divorced for ever from thy side!'

XXII.

The Knight, unhanded, never spoke—
But stood as dumb as when an oak
Replies not to the thunderstroke.

XXIII.

I watched my Lady's colour fade;
She fainted to a deathly shade,
And lay as if her grave were made.

XXIV.

Whereat the Duke to me made sign
To lift her with these arms of mine,
And bear her in, and give her wine.

XXV.

I raised my Lady all aghast,—
And loud behind me, as I passed,
The gate was slammed, and bolted fast.

XXVI.

The groom without, the bride within!—
But such a sundering was a sin,
For wedded hearts are more than kin.

XXVII.

[Hark how the ravens scream and scold!—
A sign the season will be cold.]
My Lady would not be consoled:

XXVIII.

She woke with such a start and fright,
And wept in such a widowed plight,
That I was melted at the sight.

• XXIX.

But woman's love is wondrous strong!
I helped to right my Lady's wrong:
I shall not make the story long:

XXX.

On Christmas-eve, the castle-hall
Was hung with holly, and the hall
Was thronged with guests: she fled them all,

XXXI.

And mutely as a mouse could stir
Stept to the postern, clad in fur,
And asked, Was I a friend to her?

XXXII.

I made obeisance on my knee.
'May Heaven be thy reward!' said she
'Unlock the gate, and set me free!'

XXXIII.

Oh when is ever seen or heard
Such majesty of look or word
As when a woman's soul is stirred!

XXXIV.

I durst have swung that postern-gate
Wide open then, had Death or Fate
Stood there to make the hinges grate!

XXXV.

I slid the bolt at her command,
And she—the Lady of the Land!—
Caught up and kissed this rough old hand!

XXXVI. .

I heard a champing horse outside:
The bridegroom waited for his bride:
'Farewell!' I cried, 'God speed the ride!'

XXXVII.

A single thing I hate to say:
It pricks me to this very day:
The Knight threw back his purse for pay!

XXXVIII.

It lies there yet, for aught I know!
The hand my Lady honoured so
Disdained to lift a bribe so low!

XXXIX.

The Duke was wroth, but never knew
Who drew the bolt to let her through.
[There, that's my Lady's, next to you!]

XL.

Ah well! the ways of God are right:
My Lady's babe was born at night:
My Lady died at morning-light:—

XLI.

Sweet, fragile stalk! that grew too rare
The burden of its bud to bear,
And broke while blossoming so fair!

XLII.

In one white sheet they both were dressed:
Then, with her boy upon her breast,
I laid my Lady here at rest.

XLIII.

The Knight, heart-broken, hardly stayed
Until my Lady's mound was made,
But joined the very next Crusade.

XLIV.

Now though he tried in many a fight
To meet his death, if so he might,
Yet God—whose ways, I said, are right—

XLV.

Preserved him till the wars were done,
And brought him back from Turk and Hun
To seek the grave of wife and son.

XLVI.

I hardly knew him when he came—
For he was changed, and not the same—
So wasted was his giant frame!

. XLVII.

But here among the graves, one morn,
A Pilgrim, with a beard unshorn,
And with a haggard look forlorn,

XLVIII.

Came with a palm-branch, all alone,
And at my Lady's tomb, moss-grown,
Threw down his trophy on her stone:

XLIX.

Then knelt awhile—and walked away:
And just a month from that same day
I wrapt a shroud about his clay.

L.

So here's the bride, and there's the groom:
But come and see my Lady's tomb
When summer roses are in bloom:

LI.

For now the winter wrongs the dead
By hedging thus her hallowed bed
With thorns and tanglewoods instead.

LII.

The groom lies parted from the bride;
But Life and Love, that here divide,
Are joined upon the Other Side!

A GOOD-BYE HYMN.

(On closing School for the Summer.)

I.

WE sing a song, and then we part!
How swiftly time is winging!
But sweet are farewells of the heart
When they are said in singing.
The roses climb the garden-wall;
The buds have long been blowing;
The summer's breezy voices call,
And we must now be going!

II.

The oriole trembles in her nest,
Which every wind is swaying;
The robin sings and shows his breast
While we are here delaying;
The bees have set their pipes in tune
On every head of clover;
And we must haste to hear them soon,
Or summer will be over!

III.

O God of every lowly heart
And every lofty feeling,
Be Thou adored for what Thou art
In Nature's own revealing!

Wherever summer's grass is green,
Or winter's snow is hoary,
The hiding of Thy face is seen—
We know Thee by Thy glory!

IV.

If we who sing a parting song
Have mortal meeting never,
There is a journey, short or long,
Where summer lasts for ever!
All hail, O fairest land of lands,
Whose blossoms never wither!
Although we here unclasp our hands,
Our feet shall travel thither!

*MALTBY CHAPEL.*

I.

MALTBY Chapel, as you know,
Fell three hundred years ago :
Hardly now is left a stone
Save upon the graves alone.
If your feet should chance to pass,
Weary, through the churchyard grass,
Rest them by a double tomb
Crumbling over bride and groom,
Who, as soon as they were wed,
Found the grave their bridal-bed.

II.

Flowering in the wall on high,
Like a garden in the sky,
Stood the oriel of the fane,
Whence, through many a rosy pane,
Lights of purple, blue, and red
Down through nave and aisle were shed.
Central in the fair design
Hung the Sorrowing Man divine :
Near him, gazing, knelt or stood
Mary's weeping sisterhood :
Next, with colours interchanged,
Holy emblems round were ranged
(First a bright, and then a dark);—
Here the Lion of St. Mark ;
There the Eagle of St. John ;
Cherub heads with pinions on ;
Virgin lilies, white as frost ;
Palm and olive branches, crossed ;
Picture of the Paschal Lamb ;
Letters of the great I AM ;
Last and topmost, Cross and Crown,
And a White Dove flying down.
Such a window, in the light,
Was itself a wondrous sight ;
But the eyes that on it gazed
Saw devoutly, as it blazed,
Not the hue of red or blue,—
Not the sunshine slanting through,—
But, beyond the lucent wall,
Heaven itself outshining all !

III.

Up through Maltby's dusty road
Cromwell and his pikemen strode,—
Six and twenty hundred strong,—
Roaring forth a battle song ;
Who, in marching to the fray,
Passed the chapel on their way ;
Never dreaming how, inside,
Knelt a bridegroom and his bride,—
She the daughter of a peer,
He a knight and cavalier.
Quoth the leader, ' Rub the stains
Out of yonder painted panes !'
Then a pikeman with his pike—
Gaily !—as if glad to strike !—
Drew it backward half its length,
Poised it, and with all his strength
Hurled it whizzing through the air,
Sped it with a pious prayer,
Winged it with a holy curse,
Barbed it with a Scripture verse,
Heard it dash through pane and sash
Till, above the tinkling crash,
Loud his shouting mates exclaimed,
' Bravo, Ironsides ! well-aimed !
So may every church of sin
Have the light of God let in !'

IV.

Then what happened you may guess !
O what havoc and distress !
First, the pike the pikeman hurled
Smote the Saviour of the world—

Tearing out the sacred Tree
Where He hung for you and me :
Then the rushing weapon passed
Through the chancel, flying fast—
Flashing from the shaft each hue
Which it caught in quivering through,—
Curving toward the bridal pair
Where they both were bowed in prayer—
Flying down like Death's own dart
Straight into the bride's own heart !
Back she fell against the floor,
Lying crimson in her gore,
Till her bloodless face grew pale
Like the whiteness of her veil.

v.

Years may come and years may go
Ere a mortal man shall know
Such a more than mortal pain
As the knight felt in his brain !
Long he knelt beside the dead !
Long he kissed her face and head !
Long he clasped her pulseless palm,
He in tempest, she in calm !
Stricken by his anguish dumb,
Neither words nor tears would come ;
Till at last, with groan and shriek,
This is what he tried to speak :
'O sweet body ! turned to clay—
Since thy soul hath fled away,
Let this lingering soul of mine
Lift its wings and fly to thine !—
Wed us in Thy Heavens, O Lord !'

Rose he then, and drew his sword,
Braced its hilt against the wood
Of the altar where he stood,
Leaned his breast against its point,
Stiffened every limb and joint,
Clenched his hands about the blade,
Muttered words as if he prayed,—
Then, with one ecstatic breath,
Cast himself upon his death!

VI.

Hence the churchyard has a yew
Growing by a tomb for two,—
For the grave was dug so wide
Both could slumber side by side.
But, though lovers fall to dust,
As their mortal bodies must,
Still, to souls that interblend,
Love itself can never end.

VII.

Once agen through Maltby road
Cromwell and his pikemen strode,—
Chasing Rupert,—who, distressed,
Sought a refuge and a rest,
Thought the chapel bullet-proof,
Camped his men beneath its roof,
Stood defiant for a day,
Fiery as a stag at bay,
Made a grim defence, but vain,—
Then, in darkness and in rain,
Fearful of the morrow's fight,
Stole away at dead of night.

When the Roundheads saw with rage
How the birds had quit the cage,
They, in spite, with blow on blow,
Fought the chapel for a foe!
So it came that tower and bell,
Roof and spire, together fell,—
Battered down, in name of Heaven,
April, sixteen forty-seven!



THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

I.

WE gathered roses, Blanche and I, for
little Madge one morning.
'Like every soldier's wife,' said Blanche,
'I dread a soldier's fate.'
Her voice a little trembled then, as if
at some forewarning.
—A soldier galloped up the lane, and
halted at the gate.

II.

'Which house is Malcolm Blake's?' he cried,—
'a letter for his sister!'
And when I thanked him, Blanche inquired,
'But none for *me*, his wife?'
The soldier played with Madge's curls, and
told her as he kissed her,
'Your father was my Captain, child!—I
loved him as my life!'

III.

Then suddenly he galloped off, and
left the rest unspoken.
I burst the seal, and Blanche inquired,
‘What makes you tremble so?’
What answer did I dare to make? How
should the news be broken?
I could not shield her from the stroke, yet
tried to ease the blow.

IV.

‘A battle in the swamps,’ I said; ‘our
men were brave but lost it.’
And pausing there, ‘The note,’ said I,
‘is not in Malcolm’s hand.’
And first a flush flamed through her face, and
then a shadow crossed it.
‘Read quick, dear May!—read all, I pray,
and let me understand.’

V.

I did not read it as it stood, but
tempered so the phrases
As not at first to hint the worst,—kept
back the fatal word,
And half retold his gallant charge, his
shout, his comrades’ praises,—
Till, like a statue carved in stone, she
neither spoke nor stirred!

VI.

O never yet a woman's heart was frozen
so completely!—
So unbaptized with helping tears!—so
passionless and dumb!
Spell-bound she stood, till little Madge
ran up and asked her sweetly,
'Dear mother, is the battle done? and will
my father come?'

VII.

I laid my hand on Madge's lips, and led her
to her playing.
Poor Blanche! the winter on her cheek was snowy
like her name!
What could she do but kneel and pray, and
linger at her praying?
O Christ, when other heroes die, moan
other wives the same?

VIII.

Must other women's hearts yet break, to keep
the Cause from failing?
God pity our brave lovers then, who face
the battle's blaze!
And pity wives in widowhood!—But is it
unavailing?
O Lord, give Freedom first, then Peace!—and
unto Thee be praise!

THE FISHERMAN'S CHILD.

I.

I HEARD it at the Isle of Rhu¹,
And though the tale is but a dream,
Yet dreams (you know) are often true—
However strange they seem.

II.

Now when a dream drops from the sky,
The dreamer is a lucky man
To catch it ere it passes by—
And keep it if he can.

III.

So silent was the summer day
That one could hear the far-off bees,
Till down from over fields of hay
Came winds to rough the seas.

IV.

A fisher brought his nets to land;
And just above the water's reach
He drew his wherry up the sand,
And hurried from the beach.

V.

It chanced that to the water's edge
His little son came running down
To gather river-weeds and sedge—
To twine himself a crown.

¹ In the Adriatic.

VI.

Now when he saw the stranded craft,
He clambered up the side in glee,
And tossed his head, and leapt and laughed,
And wished himself at sea.

VII.

The boat, amid the watery roar,
Was like a warning finger laid
Across the lips of sea and shore,
To hush the noise they made.

VIII.

A breaker, with a headlong swell,
Ran up around it where it lay,
And rolled so high that when it fell
It launched the boat away.

IX.

The myrtle-shrubs grew dense and green,
Between the fisher and the tide,—
And sadder sight was never seen
Than up they stood to hide.

X.

For by the breeze the drifting hull
Was blown beyond the harbour-light,
Till seaward, like a flying gull,
It dwindled out of sight.

XI.

Through all the livelong afternoon
The wherry (for the wind was free)
Fled further out from the lagoon
Into the open sea.

XII.

Meanwhile the fisher sat to mend
Each ragged rift in every net:—
A task that came not to an end
Until the sun was set.

XIII.

And so he never called his child
Until the west was all aflame,—
But then, except an echo wild,
No voice in answer came.

XIV.

Whereat, as with a giant's hand,
He seized his one remaining boat
And dragged it down the griping sand
And through the surf afloat.

XV.

He pulled his oars for thrice a league
Till down his brawny beard ran sweat,
But not a sinew felt fatigue,
For hope inspired him yet.

XVI.

The mantle of the night grew dark,
Wherein his eyes were folded blind;
And so he chased the truant barque,
To seek, but not to find.

XVII.

At last his strength was overspent,—
And down against his panting breast
His hot, bewildered head he bent,
And swooned, and lay at rest.

XVIII.

He dreamed that through a yawning wave
A child with sea-grass on his head
Went down within a boundless grave
To wander with the dead.

XIX.

Thence rising to a wondrous land,
The human creature grew divine;
And when the dreamer waved his hand,
The child gave back a sign.

XX.

The sleeper, waking with a start,
And shuddering in the chilly dew,
Knew well, by token in his heart,
The vision must be true.

XXI.

In sorrow homeward he returned,
And sank aweary in his chair,
And gazing where the embers burned
He saw the spectre there!

XXII.

The fisher's neighbours on the coast
Are honest people, and they say
That nightly at his hearth the ghost
Abides till break of day.

XXIII.

Now ask me not how near or far,
Or by what hidden jasper sea,
Or in what undiscovered star
The Throne of God may be!

XXIV.

But this I know,—that here below
He sends his angels from on high,
For Jacob saw them come and go
Betwixt the earth and sky.

XXV.

And what a holy peace it brings
To know that from the heavenly sphere
They fly to earth, and fold their wings—
To dwell with mortals here!

NO AND YES.

I.

I WATCHED her at her spinning,
And this was my beginning
Of wooing and of winning.

II.

So cruel, so uncaring,
So scornful was her bearing,
She set me half despairing!

III.

Yet sorry wit one uses
Who loves, and thinks he loses
Because a maid refuses.

IV.

Love prospers in the making
By help of all its aching
And quaking and heart-breaking!

V.

A woman's first denying
Betokens her complying
Upon a second trying!

VI.

When first I said in pleading,
'Behold, my heart lies bleeding!'—
She shook her head unheeding.

Heart's Ease.

VII.

But when agen I told her,
And blamed her growing colder,
She dropped against my shoulder.

VIII.

Then, with her eyes of splendour,
She gave a look so tender,
I knew she would surrender!

IX.

So down the lane I led her,
And while her cheek grew redder,
I sued outright to wed her!

X.

Good end from bad beginning!
My wooing came to winning!
God bless her for her spinning!

*LYRA INCANTATA.*

I.

WITHIN a castle haunted
(As castles were of old)
There hung a harp enchanted,
And on its rim of gold
This legend was enscrolled:
‘*Whatever bard would win me,
Must strike and wake within me,
By one supreme endeavour,
A chord that sounds for ever.*’

II.

Three bards of lyre and viol,
By mandate of the King,
Were bidden to a trial
To find the magic string—
(If there were such a thing).
Then, after much essaying
Of tuning, came the playing ;
And lords and ladies splendid
Watched as those bards contended.

III.

The first, a minstrel hoary,
Then sang of Goth and Hun,
Of conquest, and of glory,
Of battles fought and won :
But when his song was done,
Although the bard was lauded
(For clapping hands applauded),
Yet, spite of the laudation,
The harp ceased its vibration.

IV.

The second changed the measure,
And turned from fire and sword
To sing a song of pleasure—
The wine-cup and the board :
Till, at his wit, all roared,—
And the high hall resounded
With merriment unbounded !
—The harp, loud as the laughter,
Grew hushed as that, soon after !

V.

The third—in lover's fashion,
And with his blood on fire—
Then sang of love's pure passion—
The heart and its desire :
And as he smote the wire
The listeners, gathering round him,
Caught up a wreath and crowned him.
—The crown . . . hath faded never !
—The harp . . . resounds for ever !

THE WANDERER'S LOVE-SONG.

I.

THROUGH many a kingdom and city and land
I travel away from the clasp of thy hand ;
But whether on mountain or river or sea,
Wherever I wander, my heart is with thee !

II.

The purple and gold at the break of the day,
The sparkle of dew-drops that sprinkle my way,
The bloom on the meadow, the bud on the tree,—
Whatever hath beauty reminds me of thee !

III.

The trill of the lark as he soars to the sky,
The sigh of the pine as the wind fleeth by,
The hymn of the locust, the hum of the bee,—
Whatever makes melody whispers of thee !

IV.

If I, as a bard, strike a note of my own,
Of banquet and laughter, of battle and groan,
My song is a love-song, whatever the key,—
Whatever I sing of, I sing it for thee!

V.

Of all the fair fancies that flit through my brain,
That come and go quickly, too bright to remain,
One vanisheth never, though others may flee,—
And this is the image, my darling, of thee!

VI.

The air is enchanted wherever I go—
Thyself the Enchantress who charmeth it so!—
And bountiful Nature is buoyant and free
Because her own spirit is borrowed of thee!

VII.

Without thee, the world would be empty and drear,
For *thou* art the blessing that gives it its cheer!
I care not what fortune the Fates may decree,—
My treasure of treasures is only in thee!

VIII.

To love thee, in absence, is rapture of bliss:
Then what were thy presence, and what were thy kiss?
—From mountain to river, from river to sea,
I hasten, my darling, I hasten to thee!

AMONG THE REEDS.

(Words for Music.)

I.

SWIM fast, O wounded swan, swim fast !
Thy mate awaits thee in her nest,—
Not dreaming that the dart was cast
Which quivers in thy bleeding breast !

II.

Swim fast, O dying swan, swim fast !
Die not till she beholds thy fate,—
Lest she may deem some fickle blast
Hath blown thee to another mate !

III.

Swim fast, O faithful swan, swim fast !
The tide—adverse—is swift and strong !
Swim fast, swim fast, until at last
Thou sing to her thy dying song !



LONESOME.

PRISCILLA WAITING FOR JOHN ALDEN.

Plymouth Colony, A.D. 1623.

I.

I WANDER by the sparkling stream
That shimmers in the morning sun,
But all the glitter and the gleam
Now mock me like an empty dream,—
Through thinking of an absent one.

II.

I listen to the robin's note,
But find no music in his lay,
For though he hath a merry throat,
And many lovers on him dote,
Yet *my* true lover is away.

III.

I pluck the sweet and dewy rose,
But, spite of all the dews of morn,
No sweetness in a bud that blows
Is left when my true lover goes,—
Whose going leaves my heart forlorn.

IV.

I weary of the clouds that fly,
I weary of the winds that roar,
I weary of the earth and sky,
I weary of my own sad sigh,—
Till my true lover comes once more!

FLOWN.

Soliloquy of Saint Francis Xavier, sitting at the door of his cell at
Montmartre, in Paris.

A.D. 1534.

○ DOVE of Peace, thou long ago
Wert wont, on many a weary day,
To brood so sweetly on my woe
That half the pain was charmed away!
Then rudely did I thee affright,
And roughly did I thee affray,—
Till thou wert driven to seek by flight
Some gentler friend with whom to stay:
But now I bend my straining sight
As twilight falls on bank and brae,—
To watch until thy pinions white
Gleam toward me through the evening grey.
The glow has faded from the west.
Fly downward from thy heavenly height,
To be agen my holy guest!
Where wilt thou on the earth alight
If not in a repentant breast?
Haste hither to a heart contrite,
To lull its restlessness to rest!
Come fold thy wings with me to-night,
And let my bosom be thy nest!

THE VICTORY OF LIFE.

I.

I ONCE made search in hope to find
Abiding peace of mind.

II.

I toiled for riches—as if these
Could give the spirit ease!

III.

I turned aside to books and lore—
Still baffled as before.

IV.

I tasted then of love and fame—
But hungered still the same.

V.

I chose the sweetest paths I knew,
Where only roses grew.

VI.

—Then fell a voice from out the skies
With warning in this wise:

VII.

‘O my disciple, is it meet
That roses tempt thy feet?—

VIII.

'Thy Master, even for His head,
Had only thorns instead!'

IX.

—Then, drawn as by a heavenly grace,
I left the flowery place,

X.

And walked on cutting flints and stones,
And said with tears and groans:

XI.

'O Lord, my feet—where Thou dost lead—
Shall follow though they bleed!'

XII.

—As then I saw He chose my path
For discipline, not wrath,—

XIII.

I walked in weakness till at length
I suffered unto strength.

XIV.

—Yet never were my trials done,
But only new-begun.

XV.

For when I learned to cast disdain
Upon some special pain,—

XVI.

He gave me sharper strokes to bear,
And pierced me to despair;—

XVII.

Until, so sorely was I pressed,
I broke beneath the test,

XVIII.

And fell within the Tempter's power;—
But, in the evil hour,

XIX.

Bound hand and foot, I cried, 'O Lord!
Break Thou the three-fold cord!'

XX.

And while my soul was at her prayer,
He snatched me from the snare.

XXI.

—I then drew nigh the gate of death,
Where, struggling for my breath,

XXII.

I shook my coward knees in fear,
Aghast to stand so near.

XXIII.

Yet while I shivered in the gloom,
Down-gazing in the tomb,—

XXIV.

'O Lord,' I cried, 'bear Thou my sin,
And I will enter in!'

XXV.

—But He by Whom my soul was tried
Not yet was satisfied;

XXVI.

For then He crushed me with a blow
Of more than mortal woe,—

XXVII.

Till bitter death had been relief
To my more bitter grief.

XXVIII.

Yet bleeding, panting, in the dust,
I knew His judgement just;—

XXIX.

And since a lark with broken wing
Sometimes has heart to sing,—

XXX.

So I, all shattered, still could raise
To His dear Name the praise!

XXXI.

—Henceforth I know a holy prayer
To conquer pain and care:

XXXII.

For when my struggling flesh grows faint,
And murmurs with complaint,—

XXXIII.

My spirit cries, '*Thy will be done!*'—
And finds the victory won.



THE JOY OF GRIEF.

I.

I HAD a grief too great for tears,
And longed to weep, but tried in vain,
Until a Monk of snowy years
Appeared before me in my pain,
Who said, 'Receive what I bestow—
Heaven's balm for all who suffer so.'

II.

Resenting madly at the first
The blessing of the saintly sage,
'Depart from me—I am accurst!'
I answered, trembling in my rage;
'Hath Heaven a balm? I tell thee no!
Else why am I tormented so?'

III.

‘My son,’ said he, ‘wring not thy hands,
Beat not thy breast, tear not thy hair,
But lift to Heaven thy high demands
From knees as lowly as thy prayer,
And bounteous Heaven shall overflow
With showers of mercies on thee so!’

IV.

‘O Monk!’ quoth I, ‘to God I prayed—
To grant me riches—honour—fame!
What was the answer that He made?
A beggar’s purse—a caitiff’s name—
Ambition’s fall—hope’s overthrow—
And love’s own wounds, now bleeding so!—

V.

‘So, strip thee off, O Monk, thy hood!
Fling down thy rosary to the dust!
There is no God—if God be good!
There is no Heaven—if Heaven be just!
Life is but mockery here below—
If grief on grief can pierce it so!’

VI.

Said he, ‘O sufferer, understand
That thou art smitten of a rod
Not wielded by a mortal hand,
For He Who scourgeth thee is God—
Who loveth not to wound,—although
He needeth to chastise thee so.’

VII.

I cried, 'What is the need or gain
Of all my anguish and despair?
What profit cometh of a pain
That pierceth more than flesh can bear?
What can the tortured spirit owe
To tyrant Heaven that stings it so?'

VIII.

'My son,' he whispered, 'hear me speak:
Doth God afflict but thee alone?
He heareth many a wilder shriek—
He answereth many a deeper groan—
He striketh many a heavier blow—
He chasteneth thee and others so:

IX.

'For Life, like Death,—through all the world,
In every age since Time began,—
With an unerring aim hath hurled
A quivering dart at every man,
Till by the torture, swift or slow,
Mankind have all been tested so:

X.

'Take solace of the saints of old;—
Of Daniel to the lions flung,—
Of Joseph into Egypt sold,—
Of Israel by the serpents stung;—
If thou endure their trials, lo!
Thou shalt partake their triumphs so.'

XI.

'O Monk,' said I, 'thy proffered balm
Is bitter mockery to my breast—
For is an aching heart made calm,
Or writhing spirit lulled to rest,
Because, in ages long ago,
The martyrs winced and quivered so?—

XII.

'What if the stricken mother mourn
Because the darlings of her womb
Are from her ravished bosom torn,
And cradled in th' unpitying tomb;—
Grieves she the less to lay them low
Since Rachel once lamented so?—

XIII.

'Though round the world, from east to west,
Each human heart, on shore or main,
My own among them, like the rest,
Should quiver to the self-same pain,—
How could the universal woe
Make *me* the less unhappy so?—

XIV.

'Thrice worthier were the wish in me
To suffer more, instead of less,
Could all the groaning world go free,
Delivered through my own distress;—
Yea, Heaven itself I would forego,
To win it for my fellows so!'

XV.

Said he, 'O slow of heart, at last
The balm thou seekest thou shalt find;
For if with all the strength thou hast
Thou suffer nobly for mankind,—
All pain which thou shalt undergo
Shall turn to bliss and rapture so.'

XVI.

'Alas!' I murmured, 'how can I,—
So weak in wit, so poor in worth,
So little fit to live or die,—
Win sweetly down from Heaven to Earth
A blessing on a friend or foe
By virtue of my suffering so?'

XVII.

With voice as sweet as when a song,
Though ended, seems to echo still,
He whispered, 'They who suffer long—
And yet are patient—send a thrill
Through every soul to whom they show
The aureole of their sainthood so !

XVIII.

'And, since no other balm avails
To cool thy fever with a tear,
Remember thou the Cross, the Nails,
The Thorns, the Vinegar, the Spear,—
And sweet shall be thy bitterest throe
Because thy Master suffered so !'

XIX.

Then down I fell, a guilty thing,
 Before an Angel in disguise,
 Who, rustling each unfolding wing,
 Replumed it, radiant, for the skies,—
 Upon whose pinions, white as snow,
 I dared not look, they dazzled so!

*THE THREE FATES.*

CLOTHO, *Birth.*

LACHESIS, *Life.*

ATROPOS, *Death.*

I.

SULLEN Sisters, churlish Trine,
 Hark to a complaint of mine!
 Never since the world began
 Were ye gentle unto man!
 Never till the world shall end
 Will ye be a mortal's friend!
 Ye have done me many a wrong—
 I will chide ye with a song!

—Would that by my bitter strain
 I could make them wince with pain!—
 Torturing them with every smart
 Which they give the human heart!

One alone—of all the Three—
Shall go unrebuked of me!
Clotho is the only Fate
Whom a mortal may not hate.

II.

What is Clotho's occupation?
Listen to the strange narration:

Into every house on earth
Where a babe awaits his birth,
Clotho, when the time is full,
Enters with a creel of wool—
(Finer wool than ever grew
On a shepherd's youngest ewe—
Wool the finest ever known,
Carded by herself alone).

Happy is the house wherein
Clotho brings her wool to spin!—
For where Clotho enters not,
Lonely is a woman's lot!
Oh the empty heart and life
Of the yet unchilded wife!
So beside the marriage-bed
Clotho sits and spins a thread.

Sits and spins! No mortal eyes
See the distaff which she plies.

There she sits, and there she lingers,
Spinning with her filmy fingers

Till the strands shall number nine,
Each as strong as it is fine :
For so often hath she seen
Childbirth with its anguish keen
That she mercifully tries
(Like an angel in disguise)
To assist the happy woe
And to quicken every throe—
Lest the pain should last too long :
Hence the thread is nine-fold strong.

Round the unborn babe she winds it,
And she bids him, as she binds it,
'Now, O baby, tug and strain !
Pull the cord with might and main !
Pull, O helpless little elf,
None can help thee but thyself !'

If the tiny unborn sprite
Tugs with all his main and might,
Clotho strengthens every strand—
Lest the babe, with foot or hand,
Struggle till by some mishap
All at once the cord should snap :
—For if Clotho's thread should break,
How the mother's heart would ache !

But the thread is like to hold :
Clotho learned her art of old—
Learned it at the Birth of Time !—
And she evermore since then
Has been spinning threads for men !—
Spinning thus for ages long !—
And her threads have been so strong

That mankind, a mortal race,
Dying daily and apace,
Perish but to be renewed—
An immortal multitude !

Will the babe be born to-day ?
Clotho—she alone—can say ;
(But she answers none who ask—
Nought must interrupt her task).

Though her spinning may be slow,
Yet her thread is stronger so.

So she spins from hour to hour
Till the travail grows in power ;
Spins until the mother's moans
Sharpen into shrieks and groans ;
Spins with pitiless delight
Till the pangs are at their height ;
Spins at midnight, spins at morn,
Spins until the babe is born.

When the mother ends her throes,
Clotho drops the thread and goes—
Drops it, and with swift retreat
Leaves it short and incomplete.

Why should Clotho go in haste ?
She has little time to waste !
She from house to house must flit !
She by other beds must sit !
Cot and castle, hut and hall,
She must visit each and all.

But wherever she may go,
Spinning for the high or low,
All her work is fully done
When the thread is but begun :
Thus it is that Clotho spins—
Ending as the thread begins.

III.

If the thread, from this beginning,
Warrants now a further spinning,—
If the babe is born alive,
Lusty, bidding fair to thrive,
Uttering from his quivering throat
Hungry nature's bawling note,—
Lachesis in waiting stands
With her spindle in her hands!
—*She* must spin, in Clotho's stead,
The remainder of the thread.

So, if we could catch a glimpse
Of the three immortal nymphs,
Lachesis would show her face
Puckered with a wry grimace
Wrinkling it from chin to brow
At the task that waits her now.

From the birth of every man
Down through all his earthly span
Till the close of his career,—
Day by day, and year by year,
Season out and season in,
Lachesis must spin and spin!—

For it is her busy lot
To provide him, jot by jot,
Piece by piece, from off her coil
All his term of life and toil. ,

Be the newly-cradled thing
Born to be a carl or king,
Born to be a wit or fool,—
Lachesis must take her spool,—
And thereafter, to and fro,
Wheresoever he may go,
She must follow in his tread,
Eking out to him his thread,—
Tracking him the world around
Like his shadow on the ground,—
Spinning for him like a slave
From his cradle to his grave!

What, O what, compared with these,
Were the toils of Hercules?

Fretful Lachesis demurs
At this thankless task of hers,—
Which no mortal loves her for:
—*All* the Fates indeed abhor
What they are compelled to do,—
And the whole uncanny crew
Always eagerly would shirk
(If they dared) their irksome work—
(Knowing well how they are hated):
But the Fates themselves are fated.
They may grumble, they may fret,
But to each her task is set:
She may scorn it—she may rue it—
Yet she is foredoomed to do it.

Nor can either of the Three
Toil awhile and then go free :
Nor can each divide and share
With the other two her care :
Each with lone and dumb endeavour
Plies her weary work for ever.

Lachesis, it is confest,
Drudges harder than the rest.
Why does she so oft indeed
Spin her thread with little heed ?
Do her labours manifold
Make her prematurely old,
Till from having spun so much
She is reckless in her touch ?
Is her sight becoming dim ?
Is she womanish in whim
And (like all her sex) inclined
Fitfully to change her mind ?

Lachesis deceives, forsooth,
Every mortal in his youth—
Till he always is misled,
Hoping for too good a thread.
He expects it to be long ;
He believes it to be strong ;
He desires it to be fine ;—
But the spinner is malign !
She, with evil machinations,
Baffles all his expectations !
For she hates a happy man,
And will hurt him, if she can !
She has many a trick and cheat
To accomplish his defeat.

Thus, she lets her careless hands
Drop some necessary strands—
Till his thread, despite its length,
Fails to be of manly strength,
For he lacks a limb or lung,
Or his nerves are half unstrung,
Or his breath is short and scant
Till he has to gasp and pant
With perpetual strain and strife—
As if fighting for his life.

Or the wool that she selects
Is a fibre whose defects
Make him in his face and feature
A deformed and loathsome creature,
Till a wretch with such a thread
Rather wishes he were dead.

Or her distaff, with its twirl,
Gives his brain itself a whirl—
Till his wit may all be gone,
While his thread keeps running on.

Or, to spoil a mortal's skein
She will slight it, and complain,
And with sulkiness of soul
Will refuse to spin the whole,
Palming off with tricky art
Just a scrimpy, niggard part—
Till her thread has now no more
All its noble length of yore.
She for Adam and his peers
Spun it out a thousand years.
Stingy of her wool, she then
Made it threescore years and ten:

Now she spins it oft so loose
As to be of little use—
So it ravel's out or frays
In a few and sickly days.

But although her wicked pleasure
Is to spin a scanty measure,
Cheating all for whom she spins,
Yet, in spite of all her sins,
Lachesis for once, I find,
Has to mortal man been kind :
She forbids him to foresee
What his length of thread shall be !
—*Who* would wish to know the day
When his soul shall flit away ?

IV.

Atropos—a cruel crone—
With a heart as hard as stone—
Crouches till the time draws nigh
When a man is doomed to die :
Then, regardless of his tears,
Grinding her relentless shears,
Ruthlessly she cuts his thread—
And at once the man is dead.

Is her duty quickly done ?
It is quickly re-begun :
She must grind agen her steel—
She has other deaths to deal !—
She must snip a thread (they say)
Every minute of the day !

Thus, the terror of the land,
She of all the Triple Band
Is the wickedest and worst
And the Fate the most accurst.

Yet despite her murderous ways
She deserves a meed of praise :
What though fatal be her touch,
She is dreaded overmuch !
She can end a mortal's woe :
Why should mortals fear her so ?
Let her slash, or let her spare !
As for me, I little care !

V.

O ye churlish Sisters Three,
Spinners of a thread for me,
I have now but little doubt
That its length is nearly out.
Clotho hath her portion spun :
Lachesis will soon be done :
Atropos is near, and waits.
But my thread of life, ye Fates,
(Since ye have, for many a day,
Spun it in a grudging way,
Out of poor and flimsy stuff)—
Now at last is long enough !
Cut it, cut it when ye will !—
Why do ye keep spinning still ?

*THE TWO HUNGRY KITTENS*¹.

I.

TWO Kittens grew hungry with licking their feet,
And ran around snooping for something to eat.

II.

'Me-ow!' said the Curly-tail, 'milk would be nice.'
'Ska-fitch!' cried the Smutty-nose, 'I shall eat mice!'

III.

The house of the mice was a hole in the floor,
Too small for the kits to get in at the door.

IV.

So down in a corner they silently sat,
And waited awhile for the mice to grow fat.

V.

'Who comes?' cried a beautiful mouse, at her cheese.
The kittens replied, 'We are rats, if you please.'

VI.

'Not rats!' said the nibbler, 'your paws are not pink,
Your eyes are too big, and your tails have a kink.'

VII.

'Come out,' quoth the kits, 'and our tails and our eyes
Will then look exactly the natural size!—'

¹ This was written to be recited at a picnic of young children.

VIII.

'Sweet mouse, we invite you to go to the fair,
And you shall have plenty of combs in your hair.'

IX.

Said mousie, 'Excuse me, for *I* am engaged !'
At which the two kittens were fiercely enraged.

X.

They flew at the mouse-hole, they awfully squalled,
They fought one another, they tumbled, they sprawled,

XI.

They twisted their whiskers, they tangled their tails—
Till down came the dairymaid bringing her pails !

XII.

A pail in each hand ! And her hands they were two,
And so were her pails, and the milk it was new,

XIII.

The curd it was white, and the cream it was thin,
And both the two kittens they each tumbled in !—

XIV.

And *scat!* cried the maid with a terrible shout,
And both the two kittens they each tumbled out !

XV.

The mice and the kittens no longer are friends,
Which every one knows, so the story here ends !

THE PARSON'S COURTSHIP.

Cotasket Parish, A.D. 1695.

I.

OLD Parson Preble on his mare,
And with his wig askew behind,
Rode slowly—with the haggard air
Of one who had a troubled mind.

II.

The hour was just at set of sun—
When (in the ancient Yankee way)
The Sabbath, with its rest, was done—
And men might work, and children play.

III.

The Parson, who had preached that morn,
Had now a worldly task to do—
Which all alone, and all forlorn,
He solemnly must carry through.

IV.

Dismounting at the graveyard gate,
He entered, and sat down in tears
Beside a moss-grown slab of slate
Where lay his wife of other years.

V.

This dame, upon her dying bed—
Among the last commands she gave—
Forbade her spouse, when she was dead,
To wed agen, above her grave.

VI.

He longed to make a second choice ;
For every Sunday, in the choir,
He heard the Widow Cheney's voice
Until she grew his heart's desire.

VII.

The parson's passion, unconfessed,
Like smouldered heat within him burned—
Which never once the widow guessed,
Or quickly it had been returned.

VIII.

Beside the grave he lingered long,
And mused upon his lonely life—
Debating if a man be wrong
In wishing for a second wife.

IX.

And when the bats began to flit,
And when below him, in the town,
A candle here and there was lit—
He started off, and cantered down.

X.

The mare—whom lustily he switched—
Made lively speed along the road,
And never halted until hitched
At Widow Cheney's white abode.

XI.

The dame was busy sifting flour,
Nor heard the comer till he said,
'Be praise to that Almighty Power
Who giveth man his daily bread!'

XII.

The widow—(caught by such a guest
In just her linsey-woolsey gown,
For she had doffed her Sunday best)—
Dropt bashfully her eyelids down.

XIII.

Outspake her suitor to her face,
'I have a solemn word to say,
Whereto is need of heavenly grace,
So, Widow Cheney, let us pray!'

XIV.

Devoutly did the couple kneel—
The suitor at the rocking-chair,
The widow at the spinning-wheel—
And simple was the parson's prayer :

XV.

He mourned for uncommitted sin,
Implored a grace on all mankind,
And pled that love might enter in
And sweetly move the widow's mind.

XVI.

Uprising from his prayerful knees,
‘I seek a wife,’ the parson said,
‘And finding thee, if God shall please—
And thou be willing—we will wed!’

XVII.

The widow started with surprise
(For women old are women still)
And answered, lifting up her eyes,
‘I seek to do the heavenly will.’

XVIII.

The heavenly will was plain indeed,
And pointed to the flowery yoke,—
For love is hardly less the need
Of elder than of younger folk.

XIX.

While autumn-flowers were yet in bloom,
The people came from far and near—
To wish the joy of bride and groom,
And eat and drink the wedding-cheer.

XX.

And then beside the bridal-bed,
The bride, in a mysterious tone,
Spake softly to the groom and said,
‘I have a secret to make known:

XXI.

'The years are twelve, this very day,
Since she whose title now is mine,
The night before she passed away,
Bequeathed to me this written line:

XXII.

“To thee, O friend of all my life,
I say, before my strength be spent,
That should he wed another wife—
If *thou* art she, I rest content.”’

XXIII.

He gazed upon the well-known hand,
Thought backward of the bygone years,
Thought forward of the heavenly land,
And answered not a word for tears.

XXIV.

And, as the chronicles relate,
His wig went nevermore askew,—
For his companion kept it straight
(As every parson's wife should do).

XXV.

They lived in wedlock, he and she,
A loving pair, until they died—
And now, together, all the three
Lie in the churchyard side by side.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE CONVENT.

I.

I SEE the starlights quiver,
Like jewels in the river:
The bank is hid with sedge:
—What if I slip the edge?
I thought I knew the way
By night as well as day:
—But how a lover goes astray!

II.

The place is somewhat lonely—
I mean for just one only!
I brought the boat ashore
An hour ago or more:
Well, I will sit and wait:
She fixt the hour at eight:
—Good angels! bring her not too late!

III.

To-morrow's tongues that name her
Will hardly dare to blame her:
A lily still is white
Through all the dark of night:
The morning sun shall show
A bride as pure as snow—
Whose wedding all the world shall know.

IV.

O God! that I should gain her!
But what can so detain her?

Hist, yelping cur! thy bark
Will fright her in the dark.
What? striking nine? that's fast!
Is some one walking past?
—Oho! so thou art come at last!

v.

But why thy long delaying?
Alack! thy beads and praying!
If thou, a saint, dost hope
To kneel and kiss the Pope,
Then I, a sinner, know
Where sweeter kisses grow—
Nay, now, just once before we go!

vi.

Nay, twice, and by St. Peter
The second was the sweeter!
Quick now, and in the boat!
Good-bye, old tower and moat!
May mildew from the sky
Drop blindness on the eye
That lurks to watch our going by!

vii.

O saintly maid! I told thee
No convent-walls could hold thee!
Look! yonder comes the moon!
We started none too soon!
See how we pass that mill!
What! is the night too chill?
—Then I must fold thee closer still!

CROSS AND CRESCENT.

I.

‘DOWN with the Infidel abhorred!
Up with the banner of the Lord!’
So the Crusaders sang,
As into Palestine they poured,—
While with defiant clash and clang
Their swords and bucklers rang.

II.

‘Death to the Christian dogs,’ replied
The scornful Moslems, in their pride;
‘Let Allah’s host advance!’
Then, in the sunshine,—far and wide,—
Like summer-lightning was the glance
Of scimeter and lance.

III.

Fair Heaven on both their armies smiled,
And wished the foemen reconciled;
But in their pious rage
Each by the other was reviled,—
Till now, in wrath from age to age,
Eternal war they wage.

IV.

How can the sacred discord end?
How can the Cross and Crescent blend?
How can the trumpet cease
That calls their pennons to contend?
O Crescent, wane! O Cross, increase!
From Truth alone comes Peace!

V.

The whole Creation groans with pain
 Till He Whose right it is shall reign!
 When shall His reign begin?
 When shall the chariots quit the plain?
 O Cross, above the battle's din
 Thy peaceful triumph win!

VI.

Fulfil thy word, O Holy Book!
 O spear, be thou a pruning-hook!
 O sword, be thou a plow!
 O Child, come to the meadow-brook
 And in fulfilment of thy vow
 Lead lamb and lion *now*!

*ST. PHILIP NERI'S LITANY.*

'And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head.'—ST. JOHN XIX. 2.

I.

O THOU whose bloody brow
 Once shed its drops for *me*,
 Is there no stab or wound which now
 I may endure for *Thee*?—

II.

Or having named Thy name,
 Have I no cross to take?—
 Or is there left for me no shame
 To suffer for Thy sake?

III.

Unscourged of any whip,
Unpierced of any sting,
How shall I prove my fellowship
With Thy fierce suffering?

IV.

Yet Thy dread sacrifice
So whelms me with its woe,
That all the fountains of mine eyes
Well up and overflow.

V.

The spear that pierced Thy side
Gave wounds to more than Thee,—
For in my soul, O Crucified,
Thy cross is laid on me!

VI.

And as Thy rocky tomb
Was in a garden fair
Where all around stood flowers in bloom,
To sweeten all the air,—

VII.

So in my heart of stone
I sepulchre Thy death,
While thoughts of Thee, like roses blown,
Are sweet as Heaven's own breath.

VIII.

Where I entomb Thee, stay !—
Hid at my bosom's core !—
Nor let an angel roll away
The stone before the door !

IX.

Arise not, O my dead,
As He whom Mary sought,
(And found an empty mound instead,—
Her spices all for nought,—)

X.

O Lord, not so depart
From my enshrining breast,
But lie anointed in a heart
That by Thy death is blest !

XI.

Or if Thou shalt arise,
Quit not my heart, Thy grave,
But bear it with Thee to the skies—
A soul that Thou shalt save !



THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

I.

WITH eager arms a mother pressed
A laughing babe against her breast.

II.

Then thus to Heaven she cried in prayer :
'Now even as his face is fair,

III.

'O Lord, keep Thou his soul within
As free from any spot of sin.'

IV.

From Heaven the Lord an answer made :
'Behold, I grant as thou hast prayed.'

V.

Within her door the darkness crept,
And babe and mother sweetly slept.

VI.

The belfry rang the midnight bell ;
The watchman answered 'All is well.'

VII.

The mother, by the cradle-side,
Awoke to find the babe had died.

VIII.

With grief to set a woman wild
She caught and clasped the marble child,—

IX.

Until her heart against his own
Was broken, beating on a stone.

X.

‘O God!’ she cried in her despair,
‘Why hast thou mocked a mother’s prayer?’

XI.

Then answered He, ‘As I have willed,
Thy prayer, O woman, is fulfilled :

XII.

‘If on the earth thy child remain,
His soul shall gather many a stain :

XIII.

‘At thy behest, I stretch My hand
And take him to the heavenly land.’

XIV.

The mother heard, and bowed her head,
And laid her cheek against the dead,

XV.

And cried, ‘O God! I dare not pray—
Thou answerest in so strange a way!’

XVI.

In shadow of a taper's light
She moaned through all the livelong night ;

XVII.

But when the morning brought the sun,
She prayed, 'Thy will, O God, be done.'



SIR MARMADUKE'S MUSINGS.

I.

I WON a noble fame ;
But, with a sudden frown,
The people snatched my crown,—
And, in the mire, trod down
My lofty name.

II.

I bore a bounteous purse ;
And beggars by the way
Then blest me, day by day ;
But I, grown poor as they,
Have now their curse.

III.

I gained what men call friends ;
But now their love is hate,—
And I have learned, too late,
How mated minds unmate,
And friendship ends.

IV.

I clasped a woman's breast,—
As if her heart, I knew,
Or fancied, would be true,—
Who proved, alas! she too!
False like the rest.

V.

I now am all bereft,—
As when some tower doth fall,
With battlement, and wall,
And gate, and bridge, and all,—
And nothing left.

VI.

But I account it worth
All pangs of fair hopes crossed—
All loves and honours lost,—
To gain the Heavens, at cost
Of losing Earth.

VII.

So, lest I be inclined
To render ill for ill,—
Henceforth in me instil,
O God, a sweet good-will
To all mankind.



THE PRAYER OF THE NATIONS.

I.

O THOU by Whom the lost are found!—
Whose Holy Cross for ever stands!
Let now its shadow on the ground
Spread east and west through all the lands
Till it shall wrap the Earth around!

II.

O Lord, by this Thy conquering sign,
Let Thy extended arms outreach
To all who dwell from Palm to Pine,—
To bind each human heart to each,—
And all, O Crucified, to Thine!

III.

The Morning Stars give forth a song,
But, like a discord in the strain,
The Earth, through all her years of wrong,
For ever moans as one in pain,
And cries, How long? O God, how long?

IV.

Yet not a Star of all the Sky
To Thee hath fairness like the Earth,—
That rolls her zones before Thine eye
To show to Heaven Thy place of birth,
And sepulchre where Thou didst lie!

V.

O Thou Who cleansest men from sin,
 The Heaven of Heavens, impatient, waits
 Till round the Earth Thy reign begin!
 —O be ye lifted up, ye Gates,
 And let the King of Glory in!

*DYING AND YET LIVING.*

I.

SHE died—yet is not dead!
 Ye saw a daisy on her tomb:
 It bloomed to die—she died to bloom:
 Her summer hath not sped.

II.

She died—yet is not dead!
 Ye saw her jewels all unset:
 But God let fall a coronet
 To crown her ransomed head.

III.

She died—yet is not dead
 Ye saw her gazing toward a sky
 Whose lights are hid from mortal eye:
 She lingered—yearned—and fled.

IV.

She died—yet is not dead!
 Through pearly gate, on golden street,
 She went her way with shining feet:—
 Go ye, and thither tread!

IN MEMORIAM.

AN ACROSTIC.

THESE roses, planted on her grave have blown :
Her memory, still too fresh for graven stone,
Endures as written on our hearts alone !
O loving friend, when thee we hither bore,
Dim were our eyes, and black the weeds we wore :
Our grief hath since grown less—our love grown more !
Sweet gift of God¹, Whose gift we could not keep !—
If ever angels watch where willows weep,
A wall of folded wings shall guard thy sleep !



FRIENDSHIP.

TO —.

O TRUE and noble friend !—(too far away :
Thou on the prairie—I beside the sea)—
The spring, that should be here, makes long delay
And not a flower is open to the bee.

Meanwhile, from thee, the west wind comes to say,—
Thy feet are walking where the fields are fair,
And nests are in the boughs that late were bare.

Thou hast the early season—I, the late.

For *thee*, the blossoms of the orchard blow :
On *me*, the sea-gulls and the fog-wreaths wait.

¹ *Theodosia*, 'Gift of God.'

But shall the leagues between us loose the band
That bound us closer than we knew, or know?

I ask myself, shall we, who months ago—
Through frosty days, and in a frozen land—
Built up a friendship on the winter's snow—
Behold it melt and vanish in the spring?

False friendship was it, if it perish so!—
True friendship is an everlasting thing!

There runs a record that not only saith,
He 'loved His own,' but 'loved them to the end.'

So evermore a man shall love his friend—
With friendship that outliveth life and death!



GOD SAVE THE NATION.

A WAR HYMN¹.

I.

THOU Who ordainest, for the land's salvation,
Famine, and fire, and sword, and lamentation,
Now unto Thee we lift our supplication—
O save the nation!

II.

By the great sign, foretold of Thy appearing,
Coming in clouds, while mortal men stand fearing,
Show us—amid the smoke of battle, clearing,—
Thy chariot nearing!

¹ The metre is a re-echo of

Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus.

III.

By the brave blood that floweth like a river,
Hurl Thou a thunderbolt from out Thy quiver!
Break Thou the strong gates! Every fetter shiver!
Smite and deliver!

IV.

Slay Thou our foes, or turn them to derision!
Then, in the blood-red Valley of Decision,
Clothe Thou the fields, as in the prophet's vision,
With peace Elysian!

*SERENADE.*

I.

OPEN thy casement, and list to my lute!
Its music, O lady, is vain—
And better by far were mute—
Unless thou wilt hear the strain.

II.

Peep through thy lattice, and show me thy face!
For shortly the setting moon
Will shadow thy beauty's grace—
So show it, fair lady, soon!

III.

Down from thy balcony fling me a rope!
I linger, I long, I wait,—
With love and a lover's hope,—
For love and a lover's fate!

*THE WHITE ASS*¹.

WÜRTEMBERG, A.D. 1275.

I.

ON Hohen Neuffen's castled mount
 There bubbled once a sparkling fount,
 Now choked with tangled grass;
 And though the sentries of the foe
 Kept watching from the plain below,
 None saw the mountain-pass
 Through which the water-casks were borne
 From fount to castle, every morn,
 Upon a milk-white Ass.

II.

Who led him to and from the place?
 It was the pearl of all her race,—
 Fair Vola, she whose sire
 Denied her hand to one whose birth
 Was noble as his manly worth;
 Whereat, with youthful ire,
 Her warlike lover, with his train,
 Had come by night, and lit the plain
 With many a bivouac fire.

¹ This is a Swabian story; and as a few other ballads, springing from the same soil, will be found scattered throughout the remainder of this volume, a preliminary note concerning the country itself may be useful at this point.

Swabia is no longer on the map. Schwabenland of the sixteenth century is overlapped and blotted out by Würtemberg of the nineteenth. But Swabia, as a *name*, is still alive on men's lips—like

III.

Count Berthold, in his white old age,
Then said with all the testy rage
 That frets an agéd breast,
'My daughter is my only one;
Nor shall her lover be my son;
 For Guy of Teck loves best—
Not Vola's heart—nor Vola's hand—
But Vola's title to her land—
 And Vola's money-chest!—

IV.

'Though I be old, and soon to die,
Yet mine is still my castle high;
 And though the Triple Fates,
And all the Furies, fierce and fell,
And Prince Apollyon, hot from hell,
 With all his fiery mates,
Should beard me in my lofty den,
Yet I, with half my hundred men,
 Could still defend my gates!'

Albion, Erin, Gallia, or Columbia. It has faded from geography, to be perennial in memory and fancy.

Among the patriotic people whose native land it designates, it is a tender synonym for their love of country—a fond term which they use in boasting of their ancient lineage, and of their sturdy stock. Allemania is an older title for the same region, but the pet name is always Swabia. In Ulm or Esslingen, a citizen—with city manners—says, 'I am a Würtemberger'; but his rustic and rollicking neighbour, who visits the town as a peasant on a holiday, makes the air ring with the rustic cry, 'I am a Schwab!'

People of other countries may smile and say, 'Phoebus, what a name!'

But although the Schwabs, by the quaintness of their patois, and for

v.

—Thought Guy of Teck, 'I know a power
 To humble yonder lofty tower,
 However strong and proud;
 For though it stands on such a height
 That often it is out of sight,—
 Hid by a passing cloud,—
 Yet Hunger climbs the highest walls,
 And Famine soon shall haunt those halls
 Till Berthold's men are cowed!—

vi.

'For there, on such a craggy brink,
 What can the wretches have to drink?
 What water, or what wine?
 Of all the foes of man, the worst
 (As every soldier knows) is thirst!
 Think how those heroes pine!
 Think how in feverish, mocking dreams
 They pant for their familiar streams—
 The Neckar and the Rhine!'

their supposed Boeotian brains, have rendered themselves 'a cause of wit in others,' yet even when the laugh is against them, they still seem proud to be proverbied; and they always wear their patronymic as a badge of honour. Swabia is their country's *name*, not its *nick-name*. It is the most characteristic and genuine of all the titles which they bestow upon their fatherland.

The people are a staunch, honest, and rustic race—with a dogged dignity of manner—with a solemn love of sober enjoyment—and with a perpetual glow of human kindness in their good and Gothic hearts.

Their picturesque and hilly country—though hardly so large, and not so grand as Switzerland—possesses many a haunt of beauty, which strangers, having once seen, will ever afterward remember.

VII.

Pale Vola wrung her helpless hands,
And wept to think that hostile bands
 Were on her father's ground ;
But since she loved her lover well,
How could her virgin heart but swell
 To see the vale profound
Starred by his squadrons far and near ?
How could her soul but thrill to hear
 His martial trumpets sound ?

VIII.

The patient Ass, that came and went,
Kept wondering what the trumpets meant,
 And why the maid shed tears,
And why she often stroked his side,
And brushed the flies from off his hide,
 And why she praised his ears,
And why she asked him if at night
He dared go down from Neuffen height
 To yonder foemen's spears !

The Swabian Alps are Nature's stepping-stones to the Alps of Switzerland. The two countries are separated from each other only by the narrow width of Lake Constance ; and one and the same mirror reflects the beauties of both. The Swabian Valleys of Urach are bewitching solitudes in which the fox and the wild deer dwell within the sound of village bells. The Black Forest is an enchanted border-land of Swabian romance. The ' dark-rolling Danube ' is of Swabian origin. The Neckar, a fair daughter of the Rhine, is of Swabian career. And, although Germany is not one of the chief gardens of the earth, as England is, yet if there be a German garden-spot that may compare with Devonshire it is the smiling Valley of the Neckar : in other words, it is Swabia.

Whoever roams through the Swabian country in summer-time will

IX.

The siege went on from day to day
Till half the summer slipt away,—
Yet not a shot was fired;
And barriers on the plain were built
Where Teck, for pastime, rode at tilt,—
In glittering mail attired;
While hungry men to Berthold went
To say the castle-stores were spent,
And food was now required.

X.

Old Berthold raved and swore, and said,
'Ye cowards, come ye here for bread?
How dare ye quit your post?
Not Guy of Teck, with all his throng,
Can take a tower so high and strong!
I fear not all his host!
I fear but *ye*, O carls of mine,
Who prate of lacking bread and wine,
And giving up the ghost!'

find vineyards, music, and rural mirth; together with many a crumbled castle more beautiful in its ruin than in its prime.

It is the country of the Minnesingers of old. It is the country of the renowned Eberhart of the Beard, whom his fellow-countrymen glorify as the Americans idolize George Washington. It is the country of Kepler, the illustrious astronomer. It is the country of Tübingen and its time-honoured University. It is the country of Schubart and Frischlin and other heroes of free speech. It is the country of Danneker and his antique chisel. Above all, it is the country of Schiller and Wieland and Uhland—names to whose endless honour the whole earth is the monument.

It is with good reason, therefore, that Swabia, though lost from the map, survives for ever in history, poetry, and romance.

XI.

He flung to them an ear of wheat :
'Take each a grain,' quoth he, 'and eat!—
 And base will be the knave
Who every morning drinks his fill
Of water from our mountain-rill,
 Brought sparkling from the cave,
Yet who, for lack of crumb or crust,
Would crouch before the foe in dust,
 And yield himself a slave!—

XII.

'My daughter shrinks not from her task
Of bringing us our water-cask ;
 And, though of high degree,
She serves us like a lowly maid !
O ye faint-hearted and afraid,
 I scorn your coward plea !
Go find your courage once agen,
And be ye brave, if not as men,
 Yet as a maid can be !'

XIII.

Fair Vola, from her turret high,
Could see her lover's pennon fly ;
 Or, if the mists were dense,
Or rains begirt the mountain-height
And hid him from her straining sight,
 She turned her eyes from thence,
And in the Ass's copious ears
She told her love with smiles and tears,—
 As if the brute had sense !

XIV.

(No doubt the creature's sense was small;
For to an ass, no sense at all
Men jeeringly ascribe;
Yet oftentimes it comes to pass
That men, alas! are like the ass
At whom they love to jibe!
For Man himself, though proud he be,
Is but an ass of first degree—
And chief of all the tribe!)

XV.

The cliff which Berthold's castle crowned
Had little space for pasture-ground;
Yet on the height superb—
Serene beneath the sky's blue vault—
(And which the foe by no assault
Had ventured to disturb)—
Fair Vola's beast had room to browse,—
And there he nipped the ilex boughs,
And cropped the Cirsian herb¹.

XVI.

When Berthold's hundred hungry men
Grew gaunt within their prison-pen,
And showed the hollow cheek,—
And all were worn to skin and bone,—
Except the favoured Ass alone,
Who grew more plump and sleek,—
The soldiers shouted, 'We will slay
That fattened beast this very day—
And live on him a week!'

¹ The thistle, or *Cirsium*—especially the *Cirsium lanceolatum*, or prickly thistle.

XVII.

Old Berthold answered, 'Which is worst—
To die of hunger, or of thirst?

Go kill the Ass, who will!

But whoso kills the Ass, I swear
Shall be himself an ass to bear

The water up the hill!

—And since no soldier had the nerve
In such a dubious rôle to serve,

Their threatening tongues grew still!

XVIII.

Soon afterward, one day at dawn,
They looked, and lo! the Ass was gone!

They searched his empty stall,—

They searched his airy pasture-ground,—

They searched the castle, round and round,—

Within, without the wall,—

But could not find on all the mount,

Nor in the wood, nor at the fount,

A trace of him at all!

XIX.

No wonder!—for the books relate
How Vola, through the castle-gate,

By help of Berthold's key,—

At dead of night,—all russet-clad

As if she were a peasant-lad,—

Short-kirtled to the knee,—

Led forth the Ass, and rode him down

From Neuffen height to Neuffen town!—

For a brave girl was she!

XX.

The secret plan which she had planned
Was known—not to the hungry band—
But only to her sire :
Whom Vola—ere their food was spent—
Had begged with tears for his consent,
Which he refused with ire ;—
And yet at last the girl prevailed,
For when the final forage failed,
He granted her desire.

XXI.

Why rode she down that craggy height,
Thus all alone, at dead of night,
Through forests dim and damp,
Unguided on her darksome way
By moon, or star, or any ray
Except the glow-worm's lamp,—
Yet lighted by an inward flame
That led her, in her father's name,
To seek her lover's camp ?

XXII.

She was a woman wise and true,
And with a woman's wit she knew
By something in her breast,
That Guy of Teck, her father's foe,
Sought not her father's overthrow ;—
For well the daughter guessed
That the rich suitor for her hand
Had little need of Berthold's land,
Or tower, or treasure-chest !

XXIII.

Why else had such a gallant knight
Forborne to storm the castle's height ?

Why had the courtly foe,
With twenty captains in the field,
Sat idly by, with sword and shield,
Nor ever struck a blow ?

Nor aimed a ball against the wall ?
—She knew the meaning of it all—
For love is quick to know !

XXIV.

Now Vola's slightest nod or beck
Was will and law to Guy of Teck ;

For he had kist her hand,
And kist her brow, and kist her mouth !
—And not in all the west or south,—

And not in all the land,—
Was there a maid whom he adored
Save her whom he must woo with sword
And win with arméd band !

XXV.

Ere yet the war had broken out,—
Alone, on foot, for miles about,

This heavenly-minded maid
Had visited the poor and sick,—
The Angel of the Bailiwick !—

Too pure to be afraid !—
And every child in dorf and dell
Had seen her oft, and knew her well,—
Yet never thus arrayed !

XXVI.

She passed the town of Neuffen by
Just as the sun had lit the sky;
And folk were stirring round;
So to escape their curious gaze,
She had to take untravelled ways,
And follow flinty ground;—
Where oft the Ass would choose the road,—
As if the gentle beast she strode
Knew whither she was bound!

XXVII.

While patting him upon his pelt,
And telling him the hope she felt
And telling him the fear;—
And while the morning breezes blew,
And flashed her lover's flag in view—
(For now his camp was near)—
Poor Vola, with a maiden shame,
Remembering in what garb she came,
Wished for a woman's gear!

XXVIII.

The cocks were crowing as she went
To Guy of Teck's pavilioned tent;—
And there, in her disguise,
And blushing with her boyish face,
She made a curtesy full of grace;—
And, when he bade her rise,
She gave into her lover's hand
A letter by her sire's command,
With greetings in this wise:

XXIX.

‘Lord Teck, thou art—as all men know—
The son of my most ancient foe ;
 I fought thy sire of old ;
And *thou*—his heir in land and name—
Now comest rashly here to claim
 This castle, my stronghold ;—
Which never was thy sire’s by right,
Nor canst thou win it by thy might, .
 Nor buy it with thy gold !

XXX.

‘But woman’s love must have its way ;
What sire can say his daughter *nay*?
 I am no longer loth
To sign a peace—and I agree
That she who bears this scroll to thee
 Shall take thy ring and oath,—
And Teck and Vola shall be wed,—
And that my tower (when I am dead)
 Shall be the fief of both.’

XXXI.

Young Guy of Teck—with lover’s eyes—
Saw through the maiden’s rude disguise,
 And waved his Knights away,—
And said that he alone would speak
With such a lad, so shy and meek :
 —And what had Teck to say ?
He caught and clasped her to his breast,
While neither spake, though both confest
 What words could not convey !

XXXII.

At last he found a voice, and said,
‘The war shall end, nor shall it shed
 A drop from any heart !
The castled hill, the tented plain
Shall both be free of gory stain ;
 My army shall depart !
I seek not yonder pile of stone—
I seek but thee, and thee alone—
 And mine at last thou art !—

XXXIII.

‘So back to Neuffen summit ride,
And tell thy sire, O bonny bride,
 That I, his son to be,
Agree to quench the angry strife ;—
And when thou art my wedded wife,
 Our castles twain shall see
Their ancient feud for ever cease,
And there shall reign a sacred peace
 Between thy sire and me !’

XXXIV.

Then Vola, on the milk-white Ass,
Toiled upward through the mountain-pass,
 That still was wet with dews ;
And other dews were on her face ;
And, all-impatient at the pace
 With which she bore the news,
She switched the Ass, nor let him stop
To bite a thistle, or to crop
 The hollies or the yews !

XXXV.

Her lover to his Knights explained
That though he had no battle gained,
 Yet he had won his bride ;
And that to fight for just alone
A grey and grimy tower of stone
 Would be a foolish pride—
Since Berthold now was old and ill ;
And Berthold's fief and castled hill
 Were *his* when Berthold died.

XXXVI.

Rebuking then his murmuring men
(Who mocked at marching home agen),
 He said that if a beast
Had grown so fat on Neuffen hill,
• Their foemen must be fatter still,—
 And with the gods must feast !—
(Who on Olympus scarce fed higher !)
And that to starve them might require
 A dozen years at least !

XXXVII.

'Now God, the Lord of hosts, be praised !
Old Berthold cried, 'the siege is raised !—
 Lord Teck has quit the plain !—
See how his banners march away !
At four-score, I am young to-day !
 Our honour hath no stain !
Be blessings on our daughter's head,
For lo ! she cometh, bringing bread !—
 See yonder laden wain !'

XXXVIII.

In trundled—O the welcome sight !—
A wain, which up the mountain-height
 Lord Teck had swiftly sent,
With fruit, and wine, and many a cate,
To follow Vola to the gate,
 To show his good intent,—
And which old Berthold's famished men,
Beholding, cheered and cheered agen,
 A Carnival in Lent !

XXXIX.

There was another feast more grand,
Which every noble in the land
 Was bid to as a guest ;
And eagerly they thither sped ;
And all—on their arrival—said,
 'At last, from south to west,
Our civil broils are past and done,
For Teck is to be Berthold's son,
 And all the land shall rest.'

XL.

The nuptials were in Neuffen town,—
To which the Bride (they say) rode down
 Upon her milk-white beast.
The townsmen gave the Ass, that morn,
Instead of common hay or corn,
 A wagon-load (at least)
Of thistle-blooms from Neuffen hill ;
And, like a guest, he ate his fill
 At Vola's wedding-feast.

XLI.

The world (that honours many an ass!)
Then voted him the public grass,—
 Until, in Neuffen vale,—
In clover to his very knees,—
With whiffs and sniffs of every breeze,—
 The creature, stout and hale,
Grew like an abbot, round of girth,
And was the greatest ass on earth!—
 And hereby ends the tale¹.

¹ The tale is variously told. This Ass is a famous figure in the history of the Castle of Hohen Neuffen. The neighbouring villages have some incredible traditions concerning him. For instance, one of these is thus chronicled in Gustav Schwab's work on the Swabian Alps:

'When the fortress was still standing (says Schwab) an ass's foot hung on the wall, in the keeper's second room. This was because, in the olden time, an ass was employed as a water-carrier for the castle. The fortress was once so closely besieged that the garrison were brought to the direst straits from hunger. The ass, however, was so well fed that he died from surfeit. The garrison flung his swollen body over the walls to the enemy. When the besiegers, who had hoped to reduce the fortress by starvation, saw this fat carcass, they judged that the garrison must still have an abundance of food. They determined to raise the siege and retire. In grateful remembrance of the Ass of Hohen Neuffen, his foot was hung up, and kept in the castle which he had unwittingly kept from surrender. A woman of wealth, remembering this good service by the ass, endowed for his descendants a pasture-field which is still known as the Ass's Meadow.'

Thus far Schwab. But Schwab's tale is less credible and less pleasing than the tradition embodied in the poem: less credible, because if the dead ass had been thrown over the battlements to the besiegers, one of his feet would hardly have made its way back to the keeper's room: less pleasing, because the reader's fancy seems to demand that the ass, after rendering a public service, should receive

THE DUKE OF CAMPO SANTO.

I.

THE gate of the city stood open wide ;
And, close to the wall, on the country-side,
The Beggars were huddled upon the grass,
Expecting the Duke and his train to pass.

II.

The town was a town where he oft came in—
Yet never with herald or trumpet's din.

III.

His coming might either be soon or late :
So always the beggars kept near the gate—
For so, on the mighty, the humble wait.

IV.

The wretches were squalid, and clad in rags ;
The women—ere yet they were old—were hags ;
The children were wasted to skin and bone ;
The dogs had a hungry and human tone !

a public reward. The cruel writers who have killed the Ass of Hohen Neuffen, and who have handled his carcass so rudely, are not to be thanked. The gentle-hearted dame who afterward gave his tribe a meadow in fee simple, deserves that her *name* should be remembered ; but only her *deed* survives ; pointing the moral how a rich testator may bequeath a fortune and be forgotten, and how an ass may inherit it and be renowned.

It should be added that the stupendous ruins which now crown the summit of Hohen Neuffen are the most commanding and impressive of all the feudal monuments in Swabia : nor, except in Heidelberg, have they a match in all Germany.

V.

For poverty falls with a fearful blight!—
And pitiful, pitiful was the sight!
No man of them all but was sore distressed;
Yet oh, for the babe at the mother's breast,
The pity was more than for all the rest!

VI.

—The Duke in his chariot rumbles by!
The Beggars salute him with hue and cry!
They beg him to halt! Will his Highness heed?
—O yes, for he comes to supply their need.

VII.

His chariot stops, and the Duke descends!
He tells them, 'I visit the town, my friends,—
And so, if you hope for an alms to-day,
Speak hurriedly each, for I haste away.'

VIII.

Cried one, 'I am hungry—I ask for bread!'
—To whom, in a whisper, his Highness said,
'Why famish? Go knock at my palace-door—
If hunger be all, you shall starve no more!'

IX.

Another cried out, 'I am lame, you see—
In charity, prithee remember *me*!'
—'O cripple, I give you my healing touch!—
You never hereafter shall need your crutch!'

X.

'And I,' quoth another, 'am blind, am blind—
So out of your bounty be kind, be kind!'
—'O wretch! I will cure you this very day!—
I need but to cover your eyes with clay
To keep you, in future, by day or night,
From ever complaining of loss of sight.'

XI.

Still pressing around him, the begging crowd
Grew brazen, and shouted their wants aloud:

XII.

'My lord,' said a clamourer, 'I am old—
No dwelling have I—and the nights are cold!'
—'O thou who art homeless!—on yonder hill
Some houses are mine, that are empty still,
And waiting for lodgers to come from town:
Go choose thee a dwelling, and lay thee down:
The house, if you take it, is yours to keep—
And nothing will ever disturb your sleep!'

XIII.

'My lord,' said an urchin, with thin, white palms,
'An orphan would beg for a little alms!'
—'My laddie, or ever your bones be old,
I promise you *all* you can clutch and hold!'

XIV.

A labourer cried, 'I am willing to toil:
So set me at work—I will dig your soil!'

—‘O delver, I honour thy horny hand!
The *Spade!*—it is busy in all my land!
A plot of my ground shall be thine, in fee—
But others shall handle the spade for thee!’

XV.

A woman, too feeble to toil or spin,
Said, ‘Help me to go to my kith and kin!’
—‘O dame, I remember thy kindred well—
I shortly will send thee to where they dwell.’

XVI.

‘My lord,’ said a sufferer, sick and faint,
‘I have an incurable, strange complaint!
My fever is fiercer than I can bear:
I need a physician—and nurse—and care.’
—His Highness the Duke, on the throbbing head
Then chillingly rested his hand, and said,
‘Physician am I to the poorest poor!—
And fever is what I am come to cure!’

XVII.

They pleaded—he hearkened to every plea,
And never had beggars a friend so free!

XVIII.

He granted the noisy their loudest prayer,
And gave to the silent an equal share,
Who cried for it not, but whose woeful tale
Was told in their faces, so deathly pale.

XIX.

The last (and the neediest) wretch who spoke
Was one who was naked, and begged a cloak!

—His Highness replied, with a merry tone,
'I cannot refuse it—so take my own!'
And, doffing his mantle of sable-black,
He folded it over the beggar's back!
The Duke was a jester, and oft inclined
To practise his drollery on mankind:
And so—in uncloaking himself—his whim
Was just to uncover—from rib to limb—
His frame as a skeleton, gaunt and grim!
The beggars—beholding him—gasped for breath,
And knew that their bountiful friend was Death!

*TO THE BRIDE ISABEL.*

(Enclosing a Heart's-Ease.)

O MAIDEN, I who, many miles away,
This wayside letter of remembrance send,
To intercept thy coming wedding-day,
That hastens hither ere the roses end,
Send with it (better than a rose) a flower
Less fair, yet fitter for thy feast:
A flower worth all the gardens of the East,
And rich enough to be thy bridal-dower:
For, having heart's-ease, hast thou not enough?

But heart's-ease is a perishable stuff—
A fading flower that hath not long to live—
A mocking gift that is not mine to give :

Yet as I give the emblem, I uplift
A prayer that God will add the perfect gift.

But we who pray, know not for what we plead.

If He Who knoweth every human need
Should overrule my gift, and make it vain,
And then bestow instead His gift of pain ;
If at His 'finger-touch thy heart's-ease fade,
And wither into heart-break,—O fair maid,
Who knowest now of love, but not of grief,
Go question all the sorrows of the world,
And thou shalt find that Sorrowing Love is chief!

As if a wedding-tress should burst its braid,
Or twisted ringlet droop and hang uncurled,
And shake its orange-blossoms to the ground,
So love at last may loose what first it bound,
And drop the joys wherewith it once was crowned.

But as a bird that hath a heavenward wing
May shed a plume, yet shall not cease to sing,
So Love, despite her losses, waxeth strong,
And bears above them all a cheery song.

When thou, like other brides whose hearts have burned
With over-joy of love, hast also learned
(And wept in learning) that through all the years
Love often hath her bosom pierced of spears,—
Learn thou, by discipline of thorn and sting,
That Sorrow also is a sacred thing!

There never yet was any wedding-ring
That did not make a marriage unto tears!

When thou this fading flower away shalt fling,
May Love that hath no earthly sorrow bring
Thy bosom heart's-ease from celestial spheres!



PIERRE CARDINAL'S FAITH.

GOOD Bishop, prithee listen to my tale!—

Pierre Cardinal, a troubadour of France,
After a hundred years of troubled life
Fell sick, and called his friends, and spake these words:

‘Now since I have not lived in fear of death,
I trust I shall not die in fear of hell;
Yet when ye shall array me for the grave,
Clench fast this parchment in my folded hand,
That I may read it at the Judgement Day.’

The scroll ran thus—now rotting with his bones:

‘O God! I think the Devil should be slain;
For many a soul were saved to Thee thereby!
Yet since Thy hand hath formed me prone to sin,
If Thou be wroth at seeing me so made,
Unframe me till I be agen unborn!
But if Thou wilt not so undo my birth,—
And if I was, and am, and shall be,—then,
O Giver of my hundred years of pain,
Deny me not, I pray, Thy peace at last!
My Father! welcome Thou Thy child! Amen.’

Here stopt the writing, and the minstrel died.

Good Bishop, art thou wise? then prithee tell,—
Is old Pierre Cardinal in heaven or hell?



*RED, WHITE, AND BLUE*¹.

I.

RED Cypress! Thee I pluck to-day.
All flowers have meaning, poets say.
The legend of thy leaf
Is death and grief:
Thou growest for the sake
Of hearts that break!
And since so many hearts have bled,
Thy star hath grown blood-red!
Thee on my breast I wear,
To show a heart bleeds there!

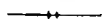
II.

White Rose! Why pluck I not the red?
The red rose is for love:
And love I not my dead?
What speaks the white rose of?
Of love in its despair!
This woe is mine to bear—
So I the white rose wear.

¹ Suggested by the rosettes which were commonly worn by citizens of the Northern States during the Civil War.

III.

Blue Harebell! Swing thyself in toll
 For a departed soul!
 Grief is thy other name;
 Grief bendeth down thy head;
 Grief boweth mine the same—
 Grief for my dead!
 But grief, most grieving, is most blest!
 O heart of mine! beat not my breast—
 God knoweth best!
 So be at rest!

*A WOMAN'S LETTER.*

MY Friend (mark, only *friend*, and nothing more!)
 To-night, in parting from you at the door,
 I meant to speak what now I haste to write.

You saw me stand awaiting your good-night;
 You asked me for my lips,—I answered nay;
 You then let fall my hand, and fled away.

The *rose* you gave me—will it not decay?
 And oh! is *love* a gift that long endures?
 A giver gave it ere you offered yours:
 If *he* was fickle—*all* men are the same—
You too! If this be harsh, am *I* to blame?
 Are bitter things that go by some sweet name
 Less bitter? Love is but a sweet-named gall.

A heart can never trust until it knows;
 A heart can never know until it trusts;
 A heart is never safe that loves at all.

Love is the pain of pains, the woe of woes !
Let women's bosoms turn to marble busts—
And thence to adamant—and so remain—
Nor ever soften into tears and pain !

You have a *right* to know ; so be it known—
I have no other heart than just a stone !

I have not said that *every* man deceives ;
Nor do I say—*no* woman's heart hath burned,
Like mine, with love, and found the love returned :
I only know the lesson I have learned !
Since then, I have not loved ; I love not now ;
I shall not love agen ! Not any vow
Which any man can make—not yours to-day—
Not were it crowned with all the buds of May—
Would change this final answer, which is Nay !

P.S.—If you are hurt by what I write,
Tear up my letter ! Come to-morrow night.



THE LOTUS-PLANTER.

I.

A BRAHMIN found a lotus-pod,
And on it wrote the name of God.

II.

Then planting it, he asked in prayer
For some new fruit, unknown and fair.

III.

A Slave near by, who clanked a chain,
Fell fainting on the dusty plain.

IV.

The Brahmin, pitying, straightway ran
And lifted up the fallen man.

V.

Oh strange that such a kindly deed
Was counter to the Brahmin's creed !

VI.

The deed scarce done, he looked aghast
At touching one beneath his caste !

VII.

'O God !' he cried, 'I am unclean !—
My hand has helped the vile and mean !'

VIII.

Whereat, ere he could flee the place,
God wrought for him an act of grace.

IX.

The pod took instantaneous root,
And sprang by miracle to fruit !

X.

Strange fruit ! Around a bulb of red,
There ran a writing, and it said :

XI.

*'Count others as of equal caste,—
And count thyself as least and last.'*

XII.

Transfigured in a sudden light,
The Slave stood sacred in his sight.

XIII.

Then clutching at the Bondman's chain,
The Brahmin cried, 'My task is plain !

XIV.

'For what is rank? and what is birth?
And what is honour on the earth?

XV.

'In Heaven, O Slave, the humblest soul
Shall wear the brightest aureole !

XVI.

'Off with thy fetters, and be crowned !—
And, in thy stead, let *me* be bound !'



THE SILVER BELL OF STUTTGART.

(On the old Church called the Stiftkirche.)

I.

THERE hangs above the giddy height
Of Stuttgart's tallest tower
A Silver Bell, in open sight,—
That gleams through sun and shower,
And glitters when the moon is bright,
And rings at nine and twelve at night,
Yet strikes no other hour.

II.

The town hath bells of louder tongue,
Some seven or eight, or more;
But this apart from all is hung,
Nor mingles in their roar;—
And quivers after it hath rung,—
As if a nightingale had sung,
That all too soon forbore.

III.

To noisy revellers at the bowl
The cadence may be drowned;
But lovers in their nightly stroll,
The watchman in his round,
The pillowed sick, the wakeful soul,
And all who ever hear it knoll
Are haunted by the sound.

IV.

For though they hear it many a time,
And though they love it well,
And though it hath a merry chime,
As of a wedding-bell,
Yet ever like a gruesome rhyme,
It wakes the memory of a crime—
A very deed of hell.

V.

Who was it gave that silver gift,
That bell as white as snow,—
Which first above the stately Stift
Rang many a year ago,
And which, without a flaw or rift,
Doth still a cheery voice uplift
Above a world of woe?

VI.

It was Ulrica—she who did
The deed so foul, so famed!—
Whose crime so long a time lay hid,
But was at last proclaimed!—
And yet, poor sufferer, God forbid
That she be now too rudely chid,
Too pitilessly blamed!

VII.

Until her love was ill-repaid,
She never wrought a wrong;
And though, in jealous rage, the maid
Took vengeance swift and strong,
Yet afterward she wept and prayed,—
And on her quivering flesh she laid
A penance fierce and long.

VIII.

Men say she had the sweetest face
In Swabia ever known,—
Save only for the riper grace
That marked her mother's own;
And they were fairest of their race,
With just the difference one could trace
In bud and rose full-blown.

IX.

Ulrica's sire was in his tomb;
And now her mother dear,—
Close in her castle and her room,—
Had mourned for him a year;
But grief must have an end of gloom;
So on the widow's cheek the bloom
Began to reappear.

X.

The widow, lofty in her 'rank,
And rich in her domain,
Was Duchess from the Neckar's bank
To Weissenberger plain;—
While at her table ate and drank
The Swiss, the Swabian, and the Frank,—
For all were of her train.

XI.

Then down from every castled height
That guards the Neckar's isles
Came every wifeless duke and knight
Within a hundred miles,—
Who all, like moths that see a light,
Were tempted by her beauty bright
To risk her dangerous smiles.

XII.

A spendthrift youth, Sir Hildebrand,
In fortune's narrow strait,
Rode forth to join the rival band
Who gathered at her gate,—
And since he owned no rood of land,
He wanted, with her heart and hand,
Her castle and estate.

XIII.

And so he crossed the Alpine snows,—
And swam the Neckar's flood;
For neither ice nor tempest froze
The ardour of his blood;
Yet rash was he when first he chose,—
For when he came to pluck the rose,
He more admired the bud!

XIV.

Then, surging through his heart and brain
There swept a swelling tide
As stormy as the billowy main,—
For passion warred with pride;
Till, reckless of his honour's stain,
He wooed the widowed chatelaine,
Yet loved the maid beside!

XV.

From nobles courtly yet uncouth,
From burghers rich yet grey,
The widow turned her to the youth,
And would not say him nay;—
And ere the world had guessed the truth,—
She secretly had set forsooth
Her early wedding-day!

XVI.

Sir Hildebrand, who with a sigh
Then caught her to his breast,
And feigned his love—(which with a lie
He oft anew professed)—
Now wished the wedding-day put by ;
Yet when she asked the reason why,
He said he did but jest.

XVII.

He put it by a month at first,
And then a month beside ;—
And for the maid, he madly nursed
His passion and his pride,—
Until he swore,—O love accurst !—
To do his best (or do his worst)
To make of *her* his bride !

XVIII.

'She is a damsel meek and pure,
Whose heart is fancy-free,
And I shall win her, I am sure,
For I am young,' quoth he,—
'And though she knows that I am poor,
Yet all for love she will endure
All poverty with me.'

XIX.

A dagger dangled from his girth,
Of silver hilt and blade ;—
A weapon which the girl, in mirth,
Would snatch, though half afraid ;—
And since it was a thing of worth,
He marked it with her name and birth,
And gave it to the maid.

XX.

The happy child, with eyes that beamed,
Gazed on the carven haft,
Kist the bright letters as they gleamed,—
Pinned with the silver shaft
Her golden hair—(whose braids, she deemed,
By contrast all the fairer seemed)—
Then blushed, and lightly laughed.

XXI.

Ulrica—save to him who won
Her love so fond and true—
Told her pure passion unto none,
But did as maidens do,—
At least as maidens oft have done,—
Hid it from all beneath the sun!—
And from her mother too!

XXII.

Then said her Lady-mother fair,
‘My daughter, search the town,
And choose a satin rich and rare,
And white as eider-down,
And cut it with a cunning care,
And sew for me a robe to wear,
To be my wedding-gown.’

XXIII.

‘Thou art as fair,’ the girl replied,
‘As fitteth thy degree;
And when thy weeds are laid aside,
Still fairer wilt thou be;
So prithee, in thy love and pride,
Sweet mother, when thou art a bride,
Who shall the bridegroom be?’

XXIV.

‘My child, I thought thy wit had guessed,—
For he is noble-born,
And holds his head among the best,
And bravely laughs to scorn
The perils which are love’s dear test,—
And Holy Church shall make us blest
On happy Easter Morn.’

XXV.

‘How can I guess, O mother sweet,
Who is thy bridegroom brave?
For many knights are at thy feet,
Who buffet wind and wave,—
Who ride on coursers strong and fleet,—
Who shine in coats of mail complete,
With crest, and mace, and glaive.’

XXVI.

‘My child, I love a youth deprived
Of castle and of land,—
So young, he never yet hath wived,
Yet woos my widowed hand!
The heart is cunningly contrived,
And mine, though dead, has been revived!
I wed Sir Hildebrand!’

XXVII.

Ulrica, when she heard her fate,
Grew hot and then grew cold!
—Now love that turns to sudden hate
Makes timid creatures bold!
The fury of the meek is great!
—The jealous maiden, all irate,
Did what the tales have told.

XXVIII.

The legend runs in many ways :
The truth is hard to know :
For since the deed was done in days
So very long ago,
There rests upon it now a haze,—
As if to dim to human gaze
Its lineaments of woe.

XXIX.

The Duchess had a shady wood
That round her castle lay,—
Where often in her widowhood
She went at dawn of day
To find a solace (if she could)
In prayer,—and daily doing good,—
As Heaven should point the way.

XXX.

So, ever as she went and came,
She scattered golden store
To bless the poor and sick and lame
At many a cottage door ;
(For many a proud and high-born dame
So served in Mercy's tender name
In those stern times of yore).

XXXI.

The Duchess, on her bridal day,
At dawn, had disappeared ;
Nor came to don her bride's array ;
And so her maidens feared
That she had early gone to pray,
And strayed too far, and lost her way
In woods so wild and weird.

XXXII.

Bright through the chapel-window gleamed
The Easter Morning sun ;
Into the aisles the people streamed ;
The anthem was begun ;
The priest—(who waited till he seemed
Vexed and impatient)—little dreamed
That murder had been done !

XXXIII.

The throng, that all the while increased,—
The ringers of the chime,—
The bridegroom, chafing like the priest,—
All tarried for a time :
Yet all in vain ! The anthem ceased !
No marriage ! and no marriage-feast !
—Yet *no* one guessed the crime.

XXXIV.

How could Ulrica, coy and meek,—
Ulrica, soft and mild,—
Whose heart was tender as her cheek,—
How could so sweet a child
Upon so dear a mother wreak
With tiger's tooth !—with vulture's beak !—
A jealous rage so wild ?

XXXV.

It was as if from out the sky
The shyest star should fall,
And hitherward in wrath should fly
To blast the earth's green ball :
A deed with which no deed could vie—
So out of nature that wellnigh
It could not be at all !

XXXVI.

The people scattered to and fro,
With minds foreboding ill,
And hunted high, and hunted low,
And tramped from glen to hill,
And traced the Neckar in its flow,
And went wherever foot could go,—
Until the night grew chill.

XXXVII.

Ulrica, mute and overwrought,
Sat bowed and yet resigned;
She went not forth with those who sought
Whom only *she* could find;
Nor asked if tidings had been brought;
But sat and sat, and thought and thought;
And none could read her mind.

XXXVIII.

Between her hands she claspt her head
With fingers stiff and numb;
And sat as rigid as the dead,
As silent as the dumb;
And only once she spake and said,—
'Ye need not spread the bridal-bed
Until the bride shall come!'

XXXIX.

Thus did Ulrica sit and sit,
While many a shout was raised,
And many a signal-light was lit,
And many a bonfire blazed,—
Till, falling in a fainting-fit,
She woke, bewildered in her wit,—
For now her brain was crazed.

XL.

She smiled, and sang a merry song,
And never shed a tear,
And from her window watched the throng
Whose voices she could hear,—
All saying as they tramped along,
‘It is a dark and hidden wrong
Which Time alone can clear!’

XLI.

Sir Hildebrand was on the rack,
And scowled with many a frown,
And curst the bride who came not back
To don her wedding-gown,
And swore the Day of Doom should crack
Ere he would follow on her track
A rood from Stuttgart town!

XLII.

He stamped his foot in pride and pique,
And smote his sworded hip,—
Enraged to lose by fortune’s freak
A prize within his grip,—
And watched Ulrica, white and weak,
And muttered what he dared not speak,
And bit his nether lip.

XLIII.

‘Pale maid,’ Sir Hildebrand then said,
‘At last the people think
Thy mother hath been three days dead;
For, though none saw her sink,
Yet, on the morn she should have wed—
The footprints of a woman led
Straight to the river’s brink!—

XLIV.

‘The Neckar’s flood is cold and deep,
And is thy mother’s tomb;
She will not waken from her sleep;
Thou canst not change her doom!
Why shouldst thou any longer weep?
—Let *us* the marriage-revels keep!
Let *us* be bride and groom!’

XLV.

‘O traitor to my mother’s shade,
What tempt’st thou me to do?
Go *thou* and lie where *she* is laid,
And *I* will lie there too!
But while I live, I live a maid!—
Who never more shall be betrayed,—
Whom never man shall woo!’

XLVI.

‘Lord of thy heart am I!’ quoth he,
‘Then why not of thy hand?
Fair lily, thou thyself shalt be
The bride of Hildebrand!’
—But when the maiden spurned his plea,
The baffled suitor crossed the sea,
And sought the Holy Land.

XLVII.

Within her virgin solitude,—
Her fever burning high,—
Its flame unquenched, although bedewed
With drops that would not dry,—
Ulrica pushed away her food,
And claspt and kissed the Holy Rood,
And prayed that she might die.

XLVIII.

And now she did so strange a thing
That bards, while they upbraid
The sinning soul of whom they sing,
Yet pause as if afraid
To chide her roughly, or to fling
A venomous and bitter sting
At such a sorrowing maid.

XLIX.

Disrobed of all her silk and lace
And beautiful attire,
She wore not only, in their place,
A hair-cloth, fierce as fire ;
But over all her head and face,
For penance, and for hope of grace,
She bound a mask of wire !

L.

The mask was woven like a net,
And narrow was its mesh,
And close against her cheeks it set,—
And when she wept afresh
Tears watered it and kept it wet,—
Until, with many a bloody sweat,
It rusted on her flesh !

LI.

The torture which her penance wrought
Wore her to skin and bone !
She deemed her pardon could be bought
At such a price alone !
'Poor child !' the pitying people thought,
'She honoureth as no daughter ought
A mother basely flown.'

LII.

For swiftly ran a rumour wild
Of how the widowed dame,
In burden of an unborn child,
Had fled to hide her shame;
Till many sneered,—and others smiled,—
And all whom she had blest, reviled
The honour of her name.

LIII.

Some said that, tempted by a witch,
She made a devil's pact
To drown her baby in a ditch,
And that her soul was racked
With many a hellish twinge and twitch
For shame that she, so high and rich,
Should sink to such an act.

LIV.

Then cried aloud the maiden mad,
'Ye know not what ye say!
How can a mother's heart be bad?
The Lord, to Whom ye pray,
Himself no purer Mother had
Than mine for whom my soul is sad
Because she hides away!—

LV.

'So cast for me a Silver Bell,—
(That clear its sound may be)—
And lift it high, and hang it well,
With hammer swinging free,—
Until my mother in her dell
Shall hear it over field and fell,
And hasten back to me!—

LVI.

'But lest my mother take affright
And hide in copse or croft,—
The hammer, when she hears it smite,
Must tingle sweet and soft,—
And I alone must mount the height
At middle eve and middle night,
To ring the bell aloft!—

LVII.

'Black though the summer-storm appear,
Or white the winter-drift,
Yet I will stand without a fear
On top of yonder Stift,
And every night of all the year
Will ring and ring till she shall hear
And hasten to her shrift.'

LVIII.

'Thine is a pretty whim!' quoth they,
'And we, at thy desire,
Will dig a mould-pit in the clay,
And build a furnace-fire,—
And thou, on next Saint Agnes' day,
Shalt come, and bring a scale, and weigh
The silver we require.'

LIX.

She weighed to them her silver belt,
Her silver bracelets twain,
The crucifix to which she knelt,
Her silver comb and chain,
Her bowls and flagons—all to melt;
And they who took her treasures, felt
A pity for her pain.

LX.

But why she gave, with lavish hand,
And penitential zest,
Each silver bodkin, brooch, and band
Of all that she possessed,
Except the dirk of Hildebrand,—
None ever seemed to understand!—
None ever asked or guessed!

LXI.

Yet afterward they often told
How through her web of wire
She saw the silver crushed and rolled
And molten in the fire,
And gazed until the bell grew cold,
And watched it taken from the mould
And hoisted to the spire.

LXII.

Then all her townsmen saw the sight
Whereof their annals tell,—
How, holding in her hand a light,
The sad and pale Pucelle,
Purest of maidens, night by night,
Would clamber up the towering height,
And ring her Silver Bell.

LXIII.

But though it made as clear a clang
As ever thrilled the air,—
And though the listeners, as it rang,
Were moved to praise and prayer,—
Yet whilst they prayed, and whilst they sang,
The bell could never soothe a pang
Of her who rang it there.

LXIV.

Yet though unsolaced by its sound,
She rang it all the same;
And ever as the night came round
Ulrica also came,—
Her face within her visor bound,—
Till by her penance, so renowned,
She earned a saintly name.

LXV.

Her flickering lamp, her fluttering sleeve,
Her flapping skirt of white,
Gleamed always there from middle-eve
Thenceforth till middle-night;
When often—as if loth to leave—
She lingered still—to groan, and grieve,
And pray till morning-light.

LXVI.

In all the vigils that she kept,
Ulrica watched alone;
And when she prayed, and when she wept,
No mortal heard the moan;
And all night long she never slept,
And never spake a word except
To God upon His Throne!

LXVII.

The kindly burghers grieved at first
To see this lily-flower
Exposed where winds were at their worst,
And oft to sleet and shower,
And would have held her if they durst,—
But, breaking loose, away she burst
And nightly climbed the tower.

LXVIII.

At last they let her have her will,
Nor tried to stay her hand;—
And seeing her so frail and ill,
With hardly strength to stand,
And shivering at the slightest chill,—
They thought she could not die until
Some boon had blest the land.

LXIX.

Then, stricken down, and sore distressed,
And on her dying bed,—
The haircloth still across her breast,
The wire about her head,—
Ulrica groaned and could not rest,
And cried that she must be confest,
And called a priest and said:

LXX.

‘O man of God, I sinned a sin,
But now my soul is pure!
My heart is clean and white within,
And my forgiveness sure!
This cloth of fire hath burnt my skin—
This veil of wire hath worn me thin—
I cannot long endure!—

LXXI.

‘The hour is nigh when I must die,
And die I gladly will,
For I in holy church shall lie,—
Yet out upon the hill
My Mother, through the wet and dry,
And under all the chilly sky
Will go unshriven still!—

LXXII.

'So ring the bell until she hears
And wakes and comes away!
Oh ring it till it pricks her ears
And calls her back to pray!
Oh ring it for a thousand years
Until the Lord Himself appears
And brings the Judgement Day!—

LXXIII.

'My Mother, when she hears it knoll,
Will come though I depart!
I did not slay my Mother's *soul*—
I only stabbed her *heart*!
Her blood would hardly fill a bowl!
My Mother's soul is sound and whole!
—Why do you stare and start?—

LXXIV.

'What though I hid her in the wood?—
Have I not toiled, and striven,
And done the best a daughter could
To call her to be shriven?
O Mother, Mother, sweet and good,
Have I not suffered as I should,
And am I not forgiven?'

LXXV.

With holy sacrament consoled,
She turned her to the wall,
And died,—and left a will enscrolled
Which gave her worldly all,—
Her land, her castle, and her gold,—
That twice the bell be nightly knolled
Until the tower should fall.

LXXVI.

The priest who heard Ulrica's tale,
And held Ulrica's hand,
Was once a warrior who, in mail,
Through all the Holy Land,
Had fought until his foes would quail
And at his very name turn pale;—
It was Sir Hildebrand!

LXXVII.

Years afterward—destroyed by flame—
The Castle was rebuilt,
And then at last the murdered Dame
Showed how her blood was spilt,
For in her heart—O deed of shame!—
A dagger with Ulrica's name
Lay buried to the hilt!

LXXVIII.

Ulrica's bell can never bring
Her mother to be shriven,
Yet as it rang so let it ring,—
That warning may be given
How Jealous Love will turn and sting,
And like a wild and furious thing
Will rend as it is riven¹!

¹ During the Middle Ages, to put a man or woman to death *unshriven*—in other words, without allowing the victim the opportunity of confessing to a priest—was held to be the chief guilt incurred in committing a murder, and was such an unpardonable wrong to the dead that the murderer's mind was likely to be ever afterward haunted with remorse, or sooner or later driven into insanity. The precious value which was thus attached to being *shriven* was based on the belief that to die without 'benefit of clergy' was to jeopardize

the soul's safety in the next world. Hence Ulrica's crazed anxiety to bring her mother to *shrift*.

Ulrica's Silver Bell—to any one who will take the trouble to climb the tower of the Stiftkirche, and to crawl out upon the roof—will be found gracefully shaped and ornamented, and in perfect preservation; for though it is now more than 500 years old, and though it has always hung (and still hangs) in the open air, freely exposed to all weathers, yet every fresh rain cleanses it from mildew, and keeps it bright—in fact, much brighter than one would expect. But the metal is silver only in part, with a necessary addition of mellow and musical bronze.

In Stuttgart, every evening the year round, after the great clocks of the city have struck the hour of nine, and just as soon as their reverberations have had time to die away into silence, Ulrica's Silver Bell—all by itself—bursts forth with a sudden, swift, and cheerful sound. Again at midnight, following the other bells—as if always a little belated, yet never but a minute behind—it merrily repeats its peal.

The bell is not connected with the works of a clock, nor rung by machinery. The tongue is set swinging in the old-fashioned way by means of a bell-rope in a ringer's hand. The ringer stands, not in the church porch, but on the top of the tower, not far from the bell.

Though it has been rung twice every night ever since the fourteenth century, yet it gives no tocsin of alarm; nor does it summon to cathedral service, or wedding, or funeral; nor is it ponderous in size, or powerful in sound; and if it were rung at nine in the morning instead of the evening, and at noon instead of midnight, it would easily be mistaken for a brisk and cheery bell in the cock-loft of some village school.

The tale in the foregoing ballad—like all local legends—has an admitted, and at the same time a disputed, historical foundation.

The reader is therefore entitled to see the following passage from a well-known and semi-official compilation which is called *Württemberg as it Was and Is*.

The compilers say:—

'The Chatelaine of Weissenberg disappeared on the night before Palm Sunday, A.D. 1347, and no one could find the least trace of her. She had retired to her room as usual, and after her devotions, had gone to bed. In the morning, one of the doors of the Castle was found open; and so no one was at first surprised that she was absent, since it was her habit to go forth at dawn, either to pray in the quiet of the woods, or to visit the poor who needed help. She usually returned

at noon ; but as she had not done this, the people thought (it being a festival day of the church) that she had probably gone to Stuttgart to attend the Stifftirche,—then called the Church of the Holy Cross. No anxiety was felt at her absence. Then, as the night grew darker and darker, and as she did not return, messengers were sent out in every direction to seek for her, but nowhere could any trace of her be found. The next day, more than a hundred people engaged in the search, but after a vain quest they returned to the Castle.

‘Then her daughter Ulrica wept bitterly. She would take no food nor drink, and she clothed herself in hair-cloths, and wore a mask of wire over her head and face. She took all her silver ornaments of great value, and sent them to a founder, that he might make of them a bell of a sweet and clear tone ; and when it was cast she had it hung on the topmost edge of the tower, and every night with her own hands rang it at nine and twelve o’clock, as a sign that her heart ached for her mother.

‘At her death the maiden left the following will, dated August 3, 1348:—

‘“I, the testatrix, Ulrica Margareta von Weissenberg, hereby will and devise that when my strength fails, and I am no longer able to ring the silver bell, two hundred marks of silver shall be taken from my estate so that from the interest of the capital some one shall be paid to ring this bell every night at nine and twelve o’clock.”’

In addition to the above extracts, others from other sources might be given, to show in what contradictory ways the story of Ulrica’s crime and penance has been told. The narratives are numerous, but not one of them is consistent, natural, or plausible ; and, strange to say, they all fail at one and the same point, namely, in assigning a sufficient motive for the murder. When a young girl kills her mother, there must be a powerful reason for the act. There is hardly a greater possible revolt against nature than the crime of matricide. As to Ulrica’s deed, it requires no less a motive than the most frenzied jealousy to account for it at all, or to make it credible in the least. Accordingly, in the opinion of the present balladist, the various incoherent fragments of the grim romance have seemed to warrant the reconstruction of ‘the city’s legend’ into a more harmonious and logical form. He has therefore taken the liberty of sifting and recasting the original materials, and of adding such new substance as poetic fancy has suggested and poetic justice has required.

MARGERY'S BEADS.

I.

QUOTH I to pretty Margery More,
'Where are the beads that once you wore?'

II.

Gay Margery sighed, and dropt her head,
And with a mournful murmur said:

III.

'I counted lovers,—one, two, three,—
Each swearing he would die for me.

IV.

'I then devised a cruel test
To prove which lover loved me best:

V.

'I held my beads above a well,
And let them slip, and down they fell.

VI.

"Leap in!" cried I, "my pretty men,
And bring me up my beads agen!"

VII.

'I tried to guess which youth would dive,
And come up, panting, half alive!

VIII.

'But love makes every man a fool:
All three dove down into the pool!

IX.

'The pool was deep,—they all were drowned,
And never were their bodies found!

X.

'What maid was ever punished so?'
And Margery's tears began to flow.

XI.

'Sad heart,' quoth I, 'be not so sore—
You yet may find three lovers more.'

XII.

'Alas!' quoth she, 'my bosom bleeds,
Not for my lovers, but my beads!'



THE MAIDS AND WIVES OF WEINSBERG¹.

A.D. 1141.

I.

THE town of Weinsberg, in the feud
 Of Weiblinger and Welf,
 Stood out a summer, unsubdued,—
 Although the siege was thrice renewed,
 And by the Kaiser's self.

II.

At last the Welf, who had so well
 Beat back the Kaiser's power,
 And whom no fire or sword could quell,
 Was forced by famine, dire and fell,
 To yield his town and tower.

¹ This comical story has been told in French by Montaigne, in German by Bürger, in English by Addison, and in other tongues by other writers, not a few. The historical facts are stated as follows in Menzel's *History of Germany* :—

'It was in 1141, while besieging the Welf in Weinsberg, that the Germans changed their war-cry "Kyrie eleison!" for the party cries, "The Welf!" "The Weiblinger!" After enduring a long siege, Welf was compelled to surrender, the Emperor Conrad granting free egress to the women, with whatever they were able to carry. The Duchess, accordingly, took her husband, Welf, on her shoulders! And all the women, following her example, they proceeded out of the city gates, to the great astonishment of the Emperor, who, struck with admiration at this act of heroism, permitted the garrison to withdraw, exclaiming to those who attempted to dissuade him, "An Emperor keeps his word."'

It should be added that the names Welf and Weiblinger correspond with Guelph and Ghibelline.

III.

'Be *death* the doom,' the Kaiser cried,
'Of traitors black as they,—
And since with such a stubborn pride
They have so long our power defied,
The dogs shall die to-day!—

IV.

'Build twenty gibbets through the town,
And in Saint Peter's name
Hang every mother's son, head down!—
And strip from every dame the gown
That hides her naked shame!'

V.

Now when the herald's trump was blown
Through street and market-square
To make the dreadful sentence known,
All Weinsberg echoed with a groan—
An outcry of despair.

VI.

A woman from the Welf's abode
Rushed forth into the street,
(Half-veiled, to hide her tears that flowed)
And, prostrate where the Kaiser rode,
Fell at his horse's feet.

VII.

The Kaiser loved her once, they say,—
A boyish freak, forsooth,—
Yet down through many an after day
A man can keep, as well he may,
The fancy of his youth.

VIII.

Quoth he, 'Unveil your beauty! Rise!
I swear, upon my life,
I know you by your voice and eyes!
You are the Duchess in disguise!
You are the Welf's own wife!—

IX.

'Now, ere you plead, lest I deny—
Ask nothing for the Welf;
He and his guilty gang must die!—
But, in the name of days gone by,
What ask you for yourself?'

X.

Quoth she, 'If I were wife to *you*,
As I am wife to *him*,
I still would pray you to undo
The death of men so brave and true,—
Oh spare them, life and limb!—

XI.

'And oh, what can you reap or glean
Of glory to your crown,
If I, who might have been your queen,
With all my women should be seen
Sent naked from the town?—

XII.

'What wrong have my poor women done?—
What treason, where or when?
Not *I*—nor *they*—have fired a gun!
The battle which you just have won
Was fought against our *men*.

XIII.

‘Our *men* are brave!—they will not care
For gibbet, axe, or brand,—
But oh to us poor *women*, spare
The mortal shame of stripping bare
In sight of all your band!’

XIV.

The Kaiser, it must be confessed,
Was of the cynic tribe,—
And it was woman, weak at best,
At whom he cracked his rudest jest,
And aimed his roughest jibe.

XV.

‘Is woman’s vanity so great,’
Cried he, ‘that sack of town,
And fall of house, and doom of mate,
Forbid not woman’s tongue to prate
Of frock and smock and gown?’

XVI.

‘Well, then, in Weinsberg be it told
I grant a woman’s prayer!—
Let all the women—young and old—
Go forth—with all their arms can hold,
And all their backs can bear!’

XVII.

The Duchess ran to all her sex,
And shouted as she ran,
‘Flee from the ruins and the wrecks!—
But save your lords’ and lovers’ necks!—
Each woman take a man!’

XVIII.

Despite their anguish, people laughed
On hearing of her scheme,
And said the Duchess must be daft
To hope to overcome by craft
A Kaiser so supreme.

XIX.

O Woman. trust the Triple Fates,
For of the Sisters Three
Each, with a woman's instinct, hates
All women's foes, and kindly waits
On every woman's plea!

XX.

Although the town was given to sack,
Yet with a throbbing breast
Each woman bore upon her back—
Or in her arms—through smoke and rack—
The man she loved the best!

XXI.

The Duchess first, with might and main,
Upbore the Duke himself,
And every woman of her train
Took up her blessing (or her bane!)
And saved a manly Welf.

XXII.

The Kaiser, though by craft beguiled,
Yet felt his pity stirred;—
And watched the train as it defiled
From street to street, and said and smiled,—
'A Kaiser keeps his word!'

XXIII.

It was a panting, tottering throng,
That staggered in its march ;
Yet love can make the weakest strong ;
And so the women toiled along
From market-place to arch.

XXIV.

Uprose from all the standers-by,—
Alike from foe and friend,—
A peal of laughter to the sky !—
Nor ever shall the echo die
Until the world shall end !



THE TRYSTING-PLACE.

I.

WHILE they lingered, he and she,
Underneath their linden-tree,—
Twilight fell on land and sea.

II.

Trembling, as the colour fled
Swiftly from her lips of red,—
'Kiss me not agen !' she said.

III.

He, unheedful of her prayer,
Kist her madly, then and there,—
Lips, and cheeks, and brow, and hair !

IV.

Half in shame, and half in pride,
'Let me go!' the maiden cried,—
Leaping from her lover's side.

V.

With a swifter leap sprang he—
Caught her—clasped her—bent his knee—
Vowed his vow—and pled his plea!

VI.

Did she frown and answer nay?
Did she smile and answer yea?
Not a word had she to say!

VII.

But a maid who sinks to rest
Mutely on her lover's breast
Leaves her answer to be guessed!

VIII.

When those lovers, hand in hand,
Stept from where those lindens stand,—
Morn had dawned on sea and land.



THE ROMANCE OF THE ROTHENBERG.

STUTT GART, A. D. 1819-1864.

I.

A LOFT, on a mountain, where mountains are serried,
The Swabians carried their king to be buried :
His tomb on the Rothenberg high
Is capped by the clouds of the sky.

II.

Not first for himself did he fashion and build it :
The wife of his youth was the tenant who filled it
Ere he, in his age, when he died,
Was carried, and laid at her side.

III.

He built it for love, yet it blazons his glory ;
For all who behold it, or hear of the story,
Give honour, as honour is due,
To love and a lover so true.

IV.

His castles may crumble, his bridges grow rotten,
His laws and his statecraft may all be forgotten ;
The thoughts of the world are on things
More vital than ashes of kings.

V.

The past is a dream, and is dim to the present ;
Yet never shall Swabia's noble or peasant
Forget, while her forests are green,
The love of the king for the queen.

VI.

So list to the tale of the sepulchre's founder,
How William, who wedded Katrina, and crowned her,
Adored, in the queen on the throne,
The saintliest wife ever known.

VII.

She prayed, and gave alms, till the needy and lowly
Declared that a princess, so humble and holy,
Around her, wherever she passed,
The odour of sanctity cast.

VIII.

The king of an opposite metal was moulded !
He laughed, and he revelled ; he swore, and he scolded ;
He boasted of having no taint
That likened him unto a saint.

IX.

It never is strange in a roystering sinner
To love a good woman, and woo her, and win her ;
And well knew the monarch the worth
Of such a good angel on earth.

X.

O death, in thy havoc, how seldom thou sparest
The noblest and brightest, the sweetest and rarest !
How often thy cruellest dart
Is aimed at the kindest heart !

XI.

The queen in her palace was mortally stricken !
The king, in his anguish at seeing her sicken,
Kept hoping (yet hoping in vain)
And writhed with a passionate pain.

XII.

To love and to lose is the keenest of losses ;
To love and to lose is the hardest of crosses ;
And death is a shadow that falls
On hovels and kingliest halls.

XIII.

As pale as the pillow whereon she was lying,
'My liege,' said the queen, on the day of her dying,
'In death I shall be, as in life,
For ever and ever your wife !

XIV.

'Wherever you lay me, continue to love me,
And if there shall ever be marble above me,
O promise me now, on your oath,
The tomb shall be *one* for us *both*.

XV.

'Make choice of a resting-place, quiet and lonely,
There *we* two together,—we twain, and we only,—
Shall slumber as bridegroom and bride
Whom not even death can divide.

XVI.

'Though long be the years you may linger behind me,
Yet seek me at last, and be certain to find me !
And there I shall patiently wait,
For I am for ever your mate.'

XVII.

The king, at her bedside, with choking and sobbing,
With groans from his heart that was brokenly throbbing,
Then kist her good-bye,—as he gave
His promise concerning her grave.

XVIII.

Aloft, where the clouds on the Rothenberg rested,
He built her a tomb where the eagles had nested,—
A sepulchre high on a crest,
And still as a halcyon's nest !

XIX.

Encircling the summit whereon she reposes,
He planted a hedgerow of lilies and roses,
And reared, in a girdle of bloom,
A temple to cover her tomb.

XX.

High over the dome, to be ever beholden,
There glitters—(with more than a light that is golden !)—
A Cross that eternally shines
On twenty green valleys of vines !

XXI.

The stork from the village, if weary of flying,
Was glad of a perch where Katrina was lying,—
And, white as a ghost, he would stay,
As if he had lingered to pray.

XXII.

Within is a chapel, with chancel and altar;
And thither, at daybreak, with censer and psalter,
A priest who has gold on his gown
Goes up with the folk of the town.

XXIII.

And always the hymn that he sings for his matin
Is chanted in Greek (which is sweeter than Latin),
And far is the melody borne—
Like music of Memnon at morn.

XXIV.

Carved over the sepulchre's ponderous portal,
A butterfly shows that the soul is immortal,—
And texts are engraven to say
That love is for ever and aye.

XXV.

And so, if the dead have the gift of divining,
The luminous hope of Katrina kept shining,—
As haply a sunbeam had slipped
From heaven down into her crypt!

XXVI.

The king, though he mourned her, yet very soon after
Went back to his flagon, his dance, and his laughter,
And played at the perilous sport
Of smiling on dames of his court.

XXVII.

What wonder that ladies of folly and fashion
Were tempted to yield to the king and his passion,
And oft (as the chronicles show)
Said yes, or a meaningless no?

XXVIII.

The heart may be lured in a novel direction,
And yet will return to its early affection:
The heart of the monarch lay hid
Down under a sepulchre's lid.

XXIX.

The love of his youth was a fancy so lasting,
That death, in despite of the shade it was casting,
Quenched never a spangle or gleam
That gilded his earliest dream.

XXX.

The love that is first is the love that is longest;
The love that is first is the love that is strongest;
For longer than life is its length,
And stronger than death is its strength.

XXXI.

The king, with his ladies, was tempted to love them;
Yet ever there hovered an image above them,
 Which beckoned him back as he strayed,
And which he adored and obeyed.

XXXII.

As honour grew weaker, and passion grew stronger,
The vision, although it restrained him no longer,
 Still followed wherever he went,
And chid him to turn and repent.

XXXIII.

At length, when the tongues of the critics were clamorous,
And dared to rebuke him as being too amorous,
 It always would bring him to shame
To speak of Katrina by name.

XXXIV.

To think of Katrina—down under her grating—
And how she was lying there—waiting and waiting—
 And how he was pledged to her yet—
Was more than the king could forget!

XXXV.

But conscience has often a way of compounding
For follies and foibles, however astounding;
 —And what did the king, to his rue,
Now haste, in his folly, to do?

XXXVI.

To quiet his mind, that was nettled and harried,
He ended the gossip, and suddenly married !

—Yet after the wedding, he still
Went weeping to Rothenberg hill !

XXXVII.

And back, where the feet of the dancers were flying,
He came with a heart that for ever was sighing !

He danced with the bride he had wed—
He sighed for his wife who was dead !

XXXVIII.

When flagons were flowing, and guests were carousing,
The king, with his head on his breast, would be drowsing,
And then he would wake with a groan !

—He dreamed of Katrina alone !

XXXIX.

He rollicked and frolicked from midnight till morrow,
Yet ever he cherished his love and his sorrow ;

—And what though his revels were great,
His duty was done to the State.

XL.

A king, yet a lover of liberty ever,
He wrought for his country with busy endeavour ;—

And proudly the chronicles say—
He never was idle a day !

XL I.

From morning till night he was building a highway,
Or planting a garden, or tracing a by-way,
Or blasting a rock or a ridge,
Or flinging the arch of a bridge.

XL II.

No minion or drudge of the palace or castle,
No dresser of vineyards, no henchman or vassal,
No delver, or son of the soil,
Outrivalled the monarch in toil.

XL III.

He hid in the scabbard the sword and the sabre;
He took for his sceptre the hammer of labour;
And, dropping his helmet and plume,
He ruled by the plough and the loom.

XL IV.

He traversed his kingdom from centre to border;
He lifted its burdens, he settled its order;
Not boasting of blood that he spilt,
But proud of the cities he built.

XL V.

He won his reward in the love of the nation,
Till pillar and statue and festal ovation
Bore witness, in city and town,
How well he had honoured the crown.

XLVI.

At last, as a patriarch, feeble and hoary,
He bade a farewell to his splendour and glory,
And gave—with a joy in his tones—
Commandment concerning his bones.

XLVII.

He spake his decree with a tranquil decision,
And looked, as he spake, as if seeing a vision;—
For great was the peace in his heart;
And strong was his wish to depart.

XLVIII.

He talked of Katrina, and how he had told her
That both of their bodies together should moulder;
And bade that his corpse, in the night,
Be carried to Rothenberg height;

XLIX.

That there, without trapping or pompous adorning,
His pall should be spread till the peep of the morning;
And then that a cannon should boom,
Saluting the twain in their tomb.

L.

Now people who visit the place of his slumber
Forget that his faults were a legion in number;—
For carpings and cavillings keen
Are spared for his love to the queen.

LI.

Through fifty long years he had lingered behind her,
Ere up through the darkness he journeyed to find her!
—Can love be a thing of the past?
—Then why did he seek her at last?

LII.

Serene on the Rothenberg summit together
They slumber in peace through the stormiest weather,
Awaiting, aloft in the skies,
The day when the dead shall arise!¹

¹ The hero of this tale was King William the First, of Württemberg, whose busy labours, whose jovial manners, and whose burly figure are still remembered in Swabia, and especially in Stuttgart. He was born in 1781, came to the throne in 1816, reigned half a century, and died in 1864, in the eighty-third year of his age. In his early manhood, while crown-prince, he served zealously in the wars against Napoleon; yet ever afterward, as king, his ambition was wholly civic instead of military. He had a gift for practical business, and he was a ceaseless director of public works. His ruling passion was not to *rule*, but to *build*. If he did not find his capital in brick and leave it in marble, he found it a small town and left it a large city.

Katrina, the wife of his youth, was a Russian princess. After a brief wedlock of only three years, she died in 1819, leaving behind her a rare reputation for charity to the poor and sick. Shortly after her coronation the peasants of Swabia were afflicted with the terrible famine of 1817, when the young and tender-hearted queen spent a great part of her private fortune in feeding the destitute. She was ever afterward reverently called 'the mother of the land.'

The mausoleum which her husband built to her memory on the Rothenberg is a circular Greek temple, partially squared by four out-jutting porticos, each portico having stately pillars and massive steps. The interior is furnished as a chapel, and contains marble statues of the Evangelists by Thorwaldsen and Danneker. The crypt, where

lie the bodies of the king and queen, side by side, is dimly seen through a heavy brass grating in the centre of the chapel floor. Three times a year, or oftener, the Greek service is performed at the altar. The temple is surrounded by a gigantic circle of rose-trees, and when the roses are in bloom the whole hill-top is as fragrant as a garden.

The Rothenberg, even without reference to the tomb that crowns it, is an interesting point in the suburbs of Stuttgart; and the view from its summit, where the mausoleum stands, is noble and impressive.

The king, in his last will and testament, said:—

‘I wish to rest in the sepulchre built for my wife Katrina, and by her side, as I promised her.’

On the outer wall of the structure is this inscription:—

Die Liebe höret nimmer auf.

(Love never faileth.)

The king's funeral is described as follows in a contemporary narrative:—

‘He gave orders that his body should be taken from his castle in Stuttgart by night, accompanied only by the court preacher, by the marshal, and by an adjutant and guard, and that the procession should be so arranged as to reach the Rothenberg at the first dawn of day. A short prayer was to be said as the body was lowered into the crypt, and a single cannon-shot was then to make known to the city (five miles off) the moment of the interment. As the procession passed on through each successive village, each house, even the poorest, had lights in the windows, and showed black draperies of mourning. The bells of all the neighbouring thorps were heard tolling, and citizens from near and far—men, women, and children—some of them weeping—came forth from their homes and joined the march.’



RECOMPENSE.

THE Temple of the Lord stood open wide,
And worshippers went up from many lands,
Who, kneeling at the altar, side by side,
Made votive-offerings with uplifted hands.

Their gifts were gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Then, with a lustrous gleam and rapturous stir,
While all the people trembled and turned pale,
There flew an Angel to the altar-rail,
Who, with anointed eyes, keen to discern,
Gazed, noting all the kneelers, who they were,
And what was each one's tribute to the Lord,—
And, gift for gift, with sudden, swift return,
Bestowed on every suppliant his reward.

O mocking recompense! To one, a spear!
To many, each a thorn! To some, a nail!
To all, a cross! But unto none, a crown!

At last, they saw the Angel disappear.

Then, as their timid hearts shook off their fear,
Some rose in anger, flung their treasures down,
And cried, 'Such gifts from Heaven as these, we spurn!
They are too cruel, and too keen to bear!
They are too grievous for a human breast!
Heaven sends us heartache, misery, and despair!
We knelt for blessing, but we rise unblest!
If Heaven so mock us, we will cease to pray!'

They left the altar, and they went their way;
But their blaspheming hearts were then self-torn
Far more by pride and heaven-defying scorn,
Than pierced before by nail, or spear, or thorn!

A few (not many!) with their brows down bent,
Gave thanks for each sharp gift that Heaven had sent,—
And each embraced his separate pain and sting
As if it were some sweet and pleasant thing,—
And each his cross with joyful tears did take,
To bear it for the great Cross-bearer's sake.

Then lo! as from the Temple forth they went,
Their bleeding bosoms, though with anguish rent,
Were calmed with sudden, swift, and sweet content;
For on each brow, though not to mortal sight,
The vanished Angel left a crown of light.



THE BESIEGED NUNNERY.

Convent of St. Mary, at Kirchheim, in South Germany, during
February, A.D. 1488.

Stave First.

I.

‘MY liege, before your head was grey
You rode to Palestine,
A belted knight, to kneel and pray
At Christ the Lord's own shrine.

II.

‘Now you who served our Holy Lord
Upon a foreign shore,
Must draw for Him your valiant sword
Here at your very door.

III.

‘For here a worse than Moor or Turk,
Yet bearer of your name,
Now works the Devil’s evil work,
And puts the Lord to shame!’

IV.

So spake to old Duke Eberhart
His still more agèd spouse,
Who smiled to see the lightnings dart
Beneath his stormy brows.

V.

The Duke then stroked his mighty beard,
And strode across his hall,
And said, ‘The God whom I have feared
Is God the Lord of all!’

VI.

‘All foes to Him are foes to me
And to my ducal crown,—
And who or what or where they be,
This arm shall strike them down!’

VII.

‘I hoped that I no more should fight,
For now my head is hoar,
But is there yet a wrong to right?—
Here at my very door?’

VIII.

‘Who is the villain? Whip him well!
And rub his wounds with sand!
What tidings have you yet to tell?
What scroll is in your hand?’

IX.

‘My liege,’ she said, ‘a Kirchheim nun,
An abbess whom I know,
Hath writ me that your foster-son
Is now your rebel foe!’

X.

‘Were I his mother—as, thank Heaven,
He is no flesh of mine!—
He should have lashes seven times seven,
And then be washed in brine!’

XI.

‘Blasphemer of the Holy Rood,
He once in Kirchheim Manse
Held revel with an abbess lewd,
And led the nuns in dance.

XII.

‘Once more a traitor to his liege,
He leads his bandits bold,
And holds the nunnery now in siege,
To rob it of its gold.

XIII.

'The brave new abbess guards the lock
And keeps the thieves away,
But she and her beleagured flock
Eat their last loaf to-day !

XIV.

'The winter-wind is cold and keen,
And they have burnt for fire
Their garden-fence, and altar-screen,
And carvings of the choir.

XV.

'And starved, and frozen, and afraid,
They now appeal to *me* ;
But who am *I* to give them aid ?—
The aid must come from *thee* !'

Stave Second.

I.

Meanwhile the Duke's rebellious heir
His foster-son, yet foe,
Besieged the convent, camping there
Amid the ice and snow.

II.

Yet little cared he for the cold ;
His bivouac fire was bright ;
Quoth he, ' Fill high, my comrades bold,
Let us carouse to-night !

III.

‘To batter down yon nunnery-wall
Were powder vainly spent ;
Waste not a cartridge, nor a ball ;
Nor let a bow be bent !

IV.

‘For Frost or Famine, soon or late,
I care not which it be,
Must open wide for us the gate,
Or send to us the key.

V.

‘The Manse was merrier, years ago,
The night we made our raid,
For many a nun next morn, we know,
Awoke no more a maid.

VI.

‘Now let them feel the Devil’s curse,
For now they sing and pray,
And when we come to raise a purse,
They bid us ride away !

VII.

‘What need have nuns of purse or pelf ?
Or wealth of cup and plate ?
What need of it hath God himself ?
Our need of it is great !

VIII.

‘We do not come to clutch it all—
But only to divide!
Sweet foes! we would not breach their wall,
But only break their pride!’

IX.

‘Let cold and hunger make them smart,
And then, my merry men,
When they have paid us to depart . . .
Why, we will come agen!’

Stave Third.

I.

At dead of night the sisterhood
Were wakened by a cry—
A mighty shout from out the wood
That clad the hill thereby.

II.

Then battle-clamours filled the air,
And clarions made a clang,
And trumpets sounded with a blare,
And all the forest rang.

III.

‘O Christ!’ exclaimed the sisters pale,
Who stood aghast with fright,
‘Shall bolts and bars no more avail,
And must we die to-night?’

IV.

'O hark! the wild and savage horde
Are battering down the gate,
And they will put us to the sword—
Or to a fouler fate!'

V.

'My daughters,' cried the abbess grey,
Undaunted by a fear,
'Flee to the altar—kneel and pray—
And God in Heaven will hear.

VI.

'He Who sustains us by His grace
Through hunger and through cold
Will scourge from out His holy place
The thieves as once of old!'

VII.

They prayed like those who think their prayer
Is breathed with dying breath!
Who pray to conquer their despair!—
To triumph over death.

VIII.

The strength for which they prayed, they *felt*—
(For prayer hath wondrous might)
And round about them, as they knelt,
There dawned a gentle light.

IX.

It was the softest, purest ray
That Heaven can send to earth,—
The dawning of a new-born day!—
And blessed was its birth.

X.

It shone upon a thousand spears
Which in the shadowy night
Had pricked the bandit Halberdiers,
And put them all to flight!

XI.

The leaves that scatter when the blast
Upon the forest blows
Fly not so wildly nor so fast
As fled the robber foes.

XII.

But now the frightened nuns within—
(Who ere the flush of dawn
Had trembled at the clash and din)—
Knew not the knaves were gone.

XIII.

So when the rescuers came and knocked,
And not a voice replied,
And the grim gate stood barred and locked,
They burst it open wide.

XIV.

Then rose a shriek that pierced the air,—
For still the nuns, dismayed,
Believed their ravishers were there
With spear and battle-blade.

XV.

And some sank fainting to the floor,
And some amid their fright
Rushed headlong to the broken door
To seek escape by flight.

XVI.

—Instead of death, or shame, or harm,—
Then burst upon their gaze
A sight that quelled their dire alarm,
And turned their prayers to praise !

XVII.

The victors brought a laden wain,
Piled high with bread and wine,
And rolled it forward through the fane
Before St. Mary's shrine.

XVIII.

No priest was there, no mass was said,
Yet steel-clad, armed men
Poured out the wine, and brake the bread,
And poured and brake agen.

XIX.

Foremost in all the happy scene,
A man with mighty beard
And shaggy brows and warlike mien
And dinted sword appeared!

XX.

It was old Eberhart the brave,—
The same who in his youth
Had vowed upon the Lord's own grave
To serve the Lord's own truth.

XXI.

And lo! behind the laden wain
His Duchess too was there!—
To whom the Abbess not in vain
Had writ in her despair.

XXII.

'O sovereign Lady,' cried the nun,
'For moving of thy lord
To this good deed which he hath done,
What shall be thy reward?'

XXIII.

'O Abbess, grant me of thy grace,'
Quoth she, with calm reply,
'The favour of a burial-place,—
For I have come to die!'

XXIV.

And when she died, the nuns alone,—
With help of *no* man's hand,—
Built to her name a pile of stone
As Lady of the Land.¹

¹ The historical facts on which this ballad is founded are given in Heinrich Gebhardt's *History of Kirchheim*, in the following passage :—

'In 1476 Eberhart the Younger, with a band of his roystering companions, visited the cloister and held . . . a dance and a mad revel. Two years later, on account of this carousal, the convent was reformed, and a new abbess appointed. In 1486 Eberhart the Younger made a demand upon the nuns for money. On their refusal he determined to compel them, through hunger, to submit to his extortions. . . . The nuns appealed to Count Eberhart of the Beard. . . . The cloister was so closely besieged that for three months the nuns were obliged to burn all the trees in the convent grounds, and were even thinking of burning the sacred images on the altar. Their food began to fail; but they were resolute, and kept up their spirits by dreams and prophecies. At length Count Eberhart of the Beard came with 4,000 men from Stuttgart, and on the 12th of February, 1488, made himself master of the town and convent, and richly indemnified the nuns for their previous sufferings. . . . The widow of Count Eberhart im Bart, Barbara, Countess of Mantua, was buried here.'

Kirchheim is now a quaint and quiet village a few miles from the ruins of Hohen Neufen and Teck; and the old cloister, or rather the present building on the site of the former, is used as an asylum for poor old women.

THE DANSKER'S REVENGE.

On the Sea-beach in Jutland.

A.D. 1655.

I.

THIS golden legend first was told
When Swedes and Danes were foes of old.

II.

One sultry morning, on a dune,
The battle ended at the noon.

III.

Two foes lay sweltering in the sand,
Each wounded by the other's hand.

IV.

The Swede cried out, 'O day accurst,
That sees a soldier die of thirst!'

V.

'My flask is full,' the Dane replied,
'Enough for both—I will divide!'

VI.

'I filled it at a mountain-spring—
Drink thou to Denmark and the King!—

VII.

'Don't spill it on the sandy beach—
Drink first!—an equal half to each!'

VIII.

The Swede, not having drunk since morn,
Reached out and took the drinking-horn.

IX.

But when the horn was in his clutch,
'The half,' he thought, 'will not be much!'

X.

So, with a devil in his heart,
He thundered out, 'No half—no part!—

XI.

'O Danish dog, if thee I kill,
The flask is mine—to drink my fill!'

XII.

Then creeping to his generous foe,
Till close enough to strike a blow,

XIII.

The dastard raised his murderous hand,
But missed, and poniarded the sand.

XIV.

Outburst the Dane, 'O hellish Swede,
How durst thou do so base a deed?—

XV.

'But I will take revenge, O knave!'
So snatching back the flask he gave,

XVI.

He touched it to his own dry tongue,
And though he was with anguish wrung,

XVII.

Yet with a loud, contemptuous laugh,
He said, 'I leave thee just a half!

XVIII.

'So curse thy loss, O greedy soul!
I meant to bid thee drink the whole!'

XIX.

The King of Denmark galloped by,
Who chanced to hear the Dane's reply,

XX.

And cried, 'Accept this golden chain!—
I dub thee Knight, O noble Dane!'

XXI.

Uprose a noise of Danish cheers—
Heard yet through thrice a hundred years!

XXII.

So every hero hath reward—
Of men—of kings—or of the Lord!

'A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.'

I.

THE old Taff tavern had for a sign
A faded flagon of painted wine,
With a mouldy motto that meant to read:
'A friend in need is a friend indeed.'

II.

When farmer, fisher, and hunter were there,
To mingle their mirth, or kill their care,—
However they wrangled, in this they agreed:
'A friend in need is a friend indeed.'

III.

They drank to the tavern-sign one day,—
Till mugs of pewter and pipes of clay
Made foam of liquor and fume of weed:
'A friend in need is a friend indeed.'

IV.

'Then here's to the truest of friends!' said one:
'What friend hath a hunter so true as his gun?
It renders him service with uttermost speed!
"A friend in need is a friend indeed."'

V.

'But what if thy powder, my lad, be wet?
No fair-weather friend is a fisherman's net!
Mine earneth me many a tankard of mead!
"A friend in need is a friend indeed."'

VI.

'Thy gun is a slayer—thy net is a snare :
Of friends so bloody and crafty beware !
I drink to the plough !—I have mouths to feed !
"A friend in need is a friend indeed."'

VII.

Then, thumping the table, they said with a laugh,
'Now who shall decide it but Grandfather Taff?—
For *he* is the landlord who lives by the creed,
"A friend in need is a friend indeed."'

VIII.

'Say, which is a man's best friend?' they cried,
'The gun, or the net, or the plough?—Decide !—
The young should unto the old give heed !
"A friend in need is a friend indeed."'

IX.

He answered, 'What fools you young men are !
I drink to the buxom maid of the bar,
Whom I to the altar to-morrow shall lead !
"A friend in need is a friend indeed."'



SHIPWRECK OF THE HEART.

A LOVER'S bosom is a billowy deep,
Whereon the breath of doubt, the gust of pride,
The storm of tears so often rudely sweep
That halcyon peace doth seldom there abide ;
For suddenly the purple sails, spread wide,
Of shallops laden with the heart's whole gain
Are struck of tempest in the middle main,
And silver masts are split, and silken ropes
Are sundered,—yea, and many an anchor-chain,
Deemed adamant, is snapped,—until, at last,
Down fathomless go freights of foundering hopes,
All sunk in dismal caverns, deep and vast :
From whence perpetual waifs come drifting back
As mouldy memories of the mighty wrack.

*THE RAGGED BARD OF RAMBIN.*

In the Middle Ages the Scandinavian village of Rambin, on the Isle of Rügen, in the Baltic Sea, was popularly supposed to be a haunt of gnomes, dwarfs, and fairies.

I.

ERE pious King Olaf
Put under a ban
The pixies and fairies
(If kings ever can !)
An Elf and a Harper
Were master and man.

II.

The Bard was a beggar
And always in rags ;
But deep in the caverns
And high in the crags,
The Elfin had treasures
In boxes and bags.—

III.

‘ Good Elf,’ quoth the poet,
‘ Thy bounty is free,
And many the boon
Thou hast granted to me,
Yet still I am needy,—
As poets must be.

IV.

‘ Three treasures I beg for,
O bountiful Elf,—
A wreath of green laurel,—
A purse full of pelf,—
And also a bride
Who is beauty itself!’

V.

‘ Oho!’ cried the Elfin,
‘ How greedy are men !
They always are croaking,—
Like fogs in a fen !
How *durst* thou, O beggar,
Come begging agen ?—

VI.

'Thou comest, O minstrel,
As oft as the moon!
I gave thee thy harp—
And thy staff—and thy shoon!
Who giveth too often
Belittles the boon!

VII.

'The laurel thou seekest
Must grow with thy song:
At fair and at market,
Go thrum to the throng:
If few be the plaudits,
Jog further along.

VIII.

'The coin thou implorest
Would buy thee a curse:
Thy gold and thy jewels
Show best in thy verse:
Yet here is a penny
To put in thy purse.

IX.

'But as for a bride,
What a crazy demand?
Think twice ere thou offer
A woman thy hand!
She marries for title—
For house—or for land!

X.

'So *I* will elect thee
A bride to be thine,—
A fairy of Elfland,—
A daughter of mine,—
Too fair for thy seeing
By sight of the eyne!'

XI.

The Bard took the penny,
And bought him his bread;
He sang himself weary,
And pillowed his head;
He slept, and a maiden
Bent over his bed.

XII.

She dawned on his vision
At dead of the night;
She danced on his eyelids
With step of a sprite;
She vanished to Elfland
At peep o' the light.

XIII.

At cock-crow, the minstrel
Went forth on his way;
He harped, and he chanted,
And sweet was his lay;
His vision by night
Was his carol by day.

XIV.

But though he was deft
With his voice and his lyre,
Yet where was the village
Or where was the shire
To take him in service
And pay him his hire?

XV.

He sang to the reapers
Who gathered their grain;
But dew from their foreheads
Were dripping like rain;
And none of the toilers
Had time for his strain.

XVI.

He joined a carousal
Of sailors ashore,
Who swaggered around him
And drank as before,
And listened a moment,
But listened no more.

XVII.

He entered where dancers
A festival kept,—
Who called him a novice
And not an adept,
For playing a measure
They never had stept.

XVIII.

He offered his anthem
At wedding and bier,
To sweeten and brighten
The smile and the tear,—
But laughers and weepers
Cared little to hear.

XIX.

At eve he returned
To the Elfin's retreat,
And said, 'I have travelled
And blistered my feet,
Not earning since morning
A mouthful to eat!'

XX.

The Elf, in the moonlight,
With wink of his eye,
Then said to the singer
(Who heard with a sigh),
'The days of the poets
Are over and by!—

XXI.

'Now therefore, with poverty
Pinching thee sharp,—
With people to cavil,
And people to carp,—
O beggarly harper,
Return me thy harp!'

XXII.

‘Nay, not for a kingdom!’
The poet replied,
‘And prithee, good Elfin,
Return me the bride
Who flitted at daybreak
And fled from my side!—

XXIII.

‘And swear by thy beard
Of a century’s growth,
To link us in wedlock,
And father us both!—
And call the six planets
To witness thy oath!’

XXIV.

‘O bard,’ quoth the Elfin,
‘I pledge to thee now
My daughter for ever!’
And, lifting his brow,
He called the six planets
To witness his vow.

XXV.

She brought to the bridegroom
No dowry of gold,
Nor lands and possessions
To have and to hold,
Nor woman’s warm body
To clasp and enfold.

XXVI.

She brought to him only
The gifts which a sprite
May bring to a poet
To be his delight,—
A dowry of fancies
By day and by night.

XXVII.

‘Go sing,’ said the Elfin,
‘Agen through the land,—
Thy bride at thy side,
And thy harp in thy hand!
The foolish shall listen—
The wise understand!—

XXVIII.

‘Go forth, but return
In a year and a day
To tell how thou farest
For singing thy lay,
And what are the plaudits,
And what is the pay.’

XXIX.

Then near him, and with him,
Invisibly went
The sprite, the fair phantom,
The bride who was sent
To breathe on his spirit
The spell of content.

XXX.

Folk smiled at the rags
Of the bard's gaberdine,
Nor dreamed that beside him,
Albeit unseen,
He had a companion
As fair as a queen.

XXXI.

For had the King's daughters
All galloped that way,
All gowned in their satins
And royal array,—
The bard had a bride
Who was richer than they.

XXXII.

His fair one was fickle,
She went and she came,
Her beauty was changeful
And never the same,
Yet always she kindled
His soul to a flame.

XXXIII.

He sang to the lofty,
He sang to the low ;
But whether the multitude
Heeded or no,
The soul of the singer
Was always aglow.

XXXIV.

For whether his music
Was gentle or strong,
Or whether he sang
To himself or the throng,—
Though *he* was the singer,
Yet *she* was the song.

XXXV.

So travelled the troubadour
All the year round ;
And when the next daffodils
Spangled the ground,
He sought for the Elfin—
Who could not be found.

XXXVI.

‘O where is your father?’
He asked of the bride.
‘My father is banished,’
She sadly replied ;
‘King Olaf has banished
My brothers beside !—

XXXVII.

‘Yea, O the indignity !
O the disgrace !
The tyrant has driven
The whole of my race
From here to the uttermost
Region of space !’

XXXVIII.

The terrible tidings
Were only too true :
The King—without warning—
Or reason—or rue—
Had done as no king
But a tyrant would do :

XXXIX.

The Elves, with their antics
And innocent mirth,
Had all by King Olaf—
With all they were worth
In trinkets and treasures—
Been swept from the earth !

XL.

The bride of the minstrel,
The last of her clan,
In spite of the sentence,
Evaded the ban
By hiding away
In the heart of a man !

XLI.

Deep hid in his bosom,
She whispered and said,
'Now write thee to Elfland
A rune to be read,
To tell how thou lovest
The sprite thou hast wed.

XLII.

‘And say that though never
A nymph or a gnome
Can now in the greenwood
Be suffered to roam,
Yet *I* in thy bosom
Have found me a home.

XLIII.

‘And say that no fairy
In forest or dell
Has ever been sheltered
Or cherished so well
As *I* by the man
In whose bosom I dwell.’

XLIV.

These verses the poet
Then pinned to a tree :
‘O King of the Elfin,
Wherever thou be,
I, poet and beggar,
Send greeting to thee :

XLV.

‘Three treasures I begged for,
O bountiful Elf,—
A wreath of green laurel,
A purse full of pelf,
And also a bride
Who was beauty itself.

XLVI.

'I harped at thy bidding
Through country and town,
Through spring, and through summer,
Till autumn grew brown,
And till from the Northland
The winter came down.

XLVII.

'Ill fareth, O master,
Thy dutiful thrall:
My Wallet is empty:
My Glory is small:
My Bride is my treasure—
My all and in all!

XLVIII.

'She cometh at midnight,
My Vision, my Dream,
My ever sweet Fancy,—
So fair that I deem
All *else* to be nothing,
For *she* is supreme.

XLIX.

'But save for my Fancy,
With wings in the air,
Uplifting my spirit,—
O Elfin, I swear
That else would my poverty
Be my despair!

L.

‘My bread, it is bitter—
By charity doled ;
My mantle is tattered ;
My sandals are old ;
My couch is the meadow—
I sleep in the cold.

LI.

‘The fate of a minstrel,
O master, is hard :
The lyre is a thing
Of forgotten regard :
The world is no longer
A place for a bard.

LII.

‘A world that is sordid,
That dickers and delves,
That banishes fairies,
That banishes elves—
Will by and by banish
The poets themselves !’

LIII.

Here ended the writing :
It hung on a yew :
And there it is hanging !
And lo ! it is true !
The fools—they are many :
The wise—they are few !

LIV.

—Oh now that King Olaf
Is under the ground,
Ye Elfins, come back
With a skip and a bound!
Come dance till the crickets
Shall join in the round!

LV.

Come dance till the rabbits
And foxes are friends!—
Till children are happy!—
Till poverty ends!—
Till beggars all share
In what Providence sends!

LVI.

Come dance till all tyrants
Be swept from the earth,
Till nobody brags
Of his rank or his birth,
But even the humble
Be counted of worth!



THE TWO ROADS.

IT was the parting of the ways :
I chose the left—a flowery maze,
When, all at once, to my affright,
A stranger pointed to the right !

Was it a warning that he meant ?
I heeded not, but on I went,
And journeyed gaily, half the morn,
Until I trod upon a thorn !

Its dagger pierced me to the quick ;
And drops of blood came fast and thick !
I sat and suffered for an hour,
And dried them with a balsam-flower.

Then up I leaped, and on I strode,
Still following the forbidden road,—
Through roses blowing or full-blown,—
And dashed my foot against a stone !

I must have fainted as I fell ;
For there—how long I cannot tell—
I lay until, as from a dream
I woke beside a purling stream :
Wherein I bathed my throbbing sore,—
And started on my way once more.

Then, through a shady sylvan scene,
Turfed softly with a tender green,
I strayed awhile—until, alas !
A serpent stung me in the grass !

With sudden horror, pain, and dread,
I turned me from the spot and fled,
And all my wayward steps retraced
Until I reached, with panting haste,
The primal parting of the ways :
Where once agen, to my amaze,
I saw the self-same stranger stand,
Still pointing with his steadfast hand :
Who said, 'How woful is the plight
Of feet that stray, though guided right !
If on this road thou travel more,
Note all the pointers—they are four :
And first, and chief, this hand of mine—
Which of itself is all the sign,
O pilgrim, thou shalt ever need,
If thou be wise to give it heed !
It is a warning, prompt and plain !
But if my finger be in vain,
The other pointers—all the three—
Thorn, flint, and sting—shall point for thee !'



THE BARD'S BURIAL.

Written for the funeral of the American Poet, William Henry
Burleigh.

IS this the only tribute we should pay?—
These funeral flowers that to his bier belong?
Himself a singer, he deserves a song:
But who has any heart to sing to-day?
Should any stranger chance to come this way,
And view with tearless eyes this lump of earth,
And call for witness to its living worth,
Our grief would choke the words that we would say!
Let us be silent—like our silent dead:
Whose virtues,—Truth, Faith, Honour, and the rest,—
With one loud-chanted requiem, all have said:
‘Behold, our chosen dwelling was his breast!’
Since tongues like these have spoken, dumb be ours!
—So let us sweetly leave him with his flowers.



THE MYSTIC MESSAGE.

Time—the reign of Philippe Auguste. *Place*—the Island of Malta.

I.

A WILD-EYED Virgin, strange in her attire,
Watched the Crusading Hosts, in their advance,
And gazed from line to line, from lance to lance,
With eager look to see the King of France;
Whom, when she spied, she knelt to, saying, ‘Sire,
I bring to thee, through forest, moor, and mire,
This Urn of Water, and this Torch of Fire!’

II.

The wondering King upraised her from her knees,
Received her gifts, and asked, 'Why bring you these?'

III.

'My liege,' she answered, 'at the dead of night
There came to me an Angel, clad in white,
Who called to me and said, "O child of grace,
The Lord Christ grieveth for the human race,—
For He appeals to mortal men in vain
Save through their hope of bliss, or fear of bane:
Why seek they Heaven? For love of God? Not so!—
But only for the bliss they hope to gain!
Why shun they Hell? For hate of evil? No!—
But only to escape the woe and pain!
Wherefore, O child, at the Lord Christ's desire,
Arise! He hath for thee an errand! Go!—
Go with swift feet that loiter not, nor tire!
Go as the wild hare runs through brake and brier!
Go as the swallow speeds upon the wing!
Go! and in going, carry to the King
Two emblems which the King will understand:

IV.

"One is this Torch that cannot cease to burn
In storm or wind! One is this Water-urn
That cannot fail to flow!—for though it spill,
It still keeps full,—to work the Heavenly Will.

V.

"Give first the Torch into the King's own hand,
And bid him whirl—three times—the burning brand!—

Round—round—and round his head!—and let it fly
Straight at the very zenith of the sky,
To set high Heaven on fire, and burn it low,
Till all its crumbled walls with ashes glow,
And not a gate remain to enter by!

VI.

“And give him then the Urn, and bid him pour
The water through some crevice in Earth’s floor!—
Down—down—deep down into the depths of Hell!—
Whose fire these cooling drops shall quench and quell,—
That the Infernal Flame may blaze no more!”

VII.

‘This do, O King, at the Lord Christ’s behest,—
Till round the rolling Earth, from east to west,
No Heaven nor Hell shall evermore be known,
But God be worshipt for Himself alone!’

VIII.

Her errand done,—with sudden leap and bound
The virgin vanished out of sight and sound!

IX.

Then in the ancient annals it is writ,—
That the King, looking whither she had fled,
Gazed long,—and kist his Crucifix,—and said:
‘What though the maid be mad! Yet in the wit
Of fools and children oftentimes there lies
A wisdom greater far than of the wise!’

THE GOATHERD'S GIFT.

TO thee, fair Shepherdess, I bring this rose,—
This red and fiery flower of love,—that grows
For all true lovers, and is love's own sign
Whereby whoever gives (or takes it) knows
That both their hearts are one,—like mine and thine!
I say, like mine and thine: Do I presume?
And am I over-bold? O maiden mine,—
If mine thou art, then wear my rose,—whose bloom
(That borrows thine) is love's own type!—Behold,
Though rains, though storms, though tempests manifold,
With all their floods, this burning flower have drenched,
Yet all their many waters have not quenched
Its ever-quenchless fire,—like love's own flame!
So take my rose,—and find my love the same!

*THE KING'S COURAGE.*

I.

KING Dionysius reigned in Syracuse;
And ancient chroniclers have tartly told,—
To his discredit,—that his life was loose;
Till his transgressions grew so manifold
That Plato, the philosopher, made bold
To warn him, at the risk of being rude,
That kings, through luxury, lose fortitude!
But the philosopher, though wise, was wrong:
The royal reveller did a deed, ere long,
The bravest ever sung by poet's song!

II.

For where there is a will, there is a way
 (At least, if that old proverb tells the truth):
So Dionysius fixt his wedding-day,
 And cried, 'A lack of fortitude, forsooth!
 Does Plato take me for a limpid youth?
O great philosopher, thou art a dunce!'
The King—who loved two women—both at once—
 Stood up between them—one on either side—
 And marrying both, endured each jealous bride,
 And lived a hero after Plato died!

CUPID'S PUZZLE,

AND HOW A MILKMAID SOLVED IT.

I.

A MAID, who was milking her cow in the clover,
 Kept warbling a love-ditty over and over,—
And *this* was the song that she sang:
 'O would there were love without plague of a lover!
 For love—without lover—if *so* it could be!—
 Were love without trouble and torment,' quoth she,
 'And *that* is the love for *me*!'
Then, patting her cow,
She uttered a vow;
 'I never will marry, but tarry as now!
My heart is my own, and my fancy is free;
And as for a Sailor for ever at sea,
What sort of a lover is *he*?'

II.

Then, softly behind her, there stole through the clover
A Sailor just landed from all the seas over,
Who forward in front of her sprang!
'My darling, behold me, thy truant true lover!
And here is the ring that I promised to thee!—
And after the day of the wedding,' cried he,
'Farewell to the waves of the sea!'
—Now maids are inclined
To changes of mind!
So she who was cruel turned suddenly kind!
'O give me the sort of a sailor,' quoth she,
'Who never goes sailing agen on the sea!—
For *he* is the lover for *me*!'

III.

And then, when the wedding had come and was over,
She patted her beautiful cow in the clover,
And *this* was the song that she sang:
'Now what do I love?—is it love, or my lover?—
Which *is* it, I wonder, or *ought* it to be?
And if it is *that*, is it *he*?
Or *both*, in an *equal* degree?—
—But never the bride
Knew how to divide
The love in her heart from the man at her side!
'What *is* it a woman loves best?' quoth she.
'Herself, and her love, and her lover,—all three!—
And *this* is the love for *me*!'

ASTRAY.

I TRAVELLED a forbidden road,
Which first appeared so flowery fair
That onward eagerly I strode
Till,—to my horror and despair!—
All buds and blossoms, blooming there,
All tender boughs and twigs of green,
Stood changed to burrs and nettles keen,—
Whose angry points my garments tore,
And pricked my hands till they were sore.

Bewildered at the wondrous change,
(That should have warned me from the place,)
I kept my course with swifter pace,
And saw a marvel still more strange;
For cruel flints sprang through the ground
To meet my feet at every bound,
With gash on gash that made them bleed.

Then time it was that I should heed!

Just at the moment of my need,
A Shining One stood at my side,—
Whose lustre fell on all around!

‘And who art *thou*?’ I trembling cried.

‘Give ear,’ said he, ‘to what I say:
I am the guide of all who stray,
To point them back to virtue’s path:
Thou wendest a forbidden way:
So in advance of thee I go,
And, step by step,—in love, not wrath,—

These angry flints and briers I strow
To sting thy feet in wandering so !'

I knelt and kissed his garment's hem,
And cried, 'O Angel, sent from Heaven,
Make sharper yet each thorny stem !
Increase the flints to seven times seven !
Pierce me and tear me till I bleed !
Give me whatever hurts I need !
Fulfil thy purpose in my pain—
I will endure, and not complain !'

He fled !—and I, with deep remorse,
Turned back from my forbidden course :
—And oh, that ever at my side
He would go with me as a guide !



THE FRENCH LESSON.

I.

SHALL I teach you French, my dear ?
Sit and con your lesson here :
What did Adam say to Eve ?
Aimer, aimer, ah ! c'est vivre !

II.

Don't roll out the *last* word long—
Clip it short to suit the song—
Rhyme it to your flowing sleeve—
Aimer, aimer, ah ! c'est vivre !

III.

Sleeve I mean, of course, for arm—
Arm for waist—so would it harm
Just to clasp you?—by your leave?—
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!

IV.

Speaking French is full of slips—
Do as *I* do with the lips :
Here's the method, you perceive!—
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!

V.

Pretty pupil, when you say
All this French to me to-day,
Do you mean it, or deceive?—
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!

VI.

Aimer, that's to love, you know!
Say it to me soft and low!
Make me feel that you believe
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!

VII.

For in France, you understand,
When they press each other's hand,
Then their hearts together cleave!—
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!

VIII.

Bride of beauty! In your hair,
 You shall orange-blossoms wear!
 When may I the garland weave?
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!

IX.

Sweetheart, do not rise to go—
 Sit and let me hold you so!
 Adam did the same to Eve!—
Aimer, aimer, ah! c'est vivre!



THE FORLORN HOPE.

I.

OUT of twenty in the fight,
 That morn,—
 To their burial ten, that night,
 Were borne;
 And their faces, toward the moon,
 Looked pale;—
 And the night-wind murmured forth
 Its wail!
 ‘We are beaten—we are flying—
 We are wounded—we are dying—
 Yet we cannot leave them lying
 With no word of blessing said!’
 So, the soldiers all complying,
 Then the sergeant bared his head,
 And he read the holy service
 For the burial of the dead.

II.

'Is there any other prayer

To pray?

Is there any other word

To say?

Is there any other sod

To bring?

Is there any other flower

To fling?

We must do it now or never!

Not a minute can we stay!

We must scatter—and endeavour

Each to flee a separate way!

Since the dead are safe for ever,

Save yourselves, if so ye may!'

—And they left their buried comrade,

And escaped ere break of day.



THE MINNESINGER'S WIFE.

A.D. 1285.

(GOTTFRIED VON NEUFEN speaks :)

I.

NOT only in my lady's eyes

Do I her beauty find,

But all the lore that poets prize

Is garnered in her mind.

II.

She is the soul of all I sing,—
For though to me belong
The pipe, the shell, the chorded string,
She is herself the song.

III.

There is no wisdom in my word,
Nor music in my lay,
Save what I have more sweetly heard
My lady sing or say.

IV.

She gazeth at the flower and star,
And readeth in their looks
A mystic meaning deeper far
Than any writ in books.

V.

I often to my love have read
The bards of olden times,—
And then some happy word she said
Outrivalled all their rhymes.

VI.

She is so fair, she is so wise,
She is so pure in thought,
She seems an angel of the skies
Whom I have snared and caught.

VII.

She loves me with a love so true
It never can be told,—
A love like love when love was new,
Before the earth grew old.

VIII.

O never yet such lovers were,
And never more shall be,
For I am all the world to her,—
She, all the world to me!¹

*BONAVENTURA.*

(At the foot of Mount Caucasus.)

I.

‘**N**OW tell me my fortune!—and when it is told,
I promise to give thee a ruble of gold!
My lover afar—is he faithful? O say!—
Then why does he loiter so long on the way?’

¹ These words are put into the mouth of Gottfried von Neufen because he was one of the chief Minnesingers of his time. He was a grandson of the famous Count Berthold von Neufen, who is mentioned in the present volume in the ballad of ‘The White Ass.’ Gottfried’s lays were written in the quaint old German of the thirteenth century. He gaily celebrated the red lips of his wife in some stanzas that still remain.

II.

'I see, by thy hand, that thy lover shall ride
 From over the mountain to make thee his bride!
 Like dew to the bud,—or the bud to the bee,—
 Be faithful to *him*!—he is faithful to *thee*!'

III.

The teller of fortunes flung off his disguise,
 And *there* stood her lover, with love in his eyes!
 And each of their fortunes,—more precious than gold,—
 Was all that the arms of two lovers could hold!

*THE FATE OF FRISCHLIN.¹*

Scene—Urach Castle, South Germany.

Time—Sunday night, November 29, A.D. 1590.

I.

I WANDERED far, with happy feet,
 In lands beyond the sea,
 Through forest dim, and meadow sweet,
 And haunt of bird and bee,
 And found the greenest spot of all
 By Urach's whispering waterfall.

¹ This was Professor Nicholas Frischlin, of the University of Tübingen. The narrative is true. A biographical notice of the hero is given in the Appendix.

II.

The ruins of a castle old
Crown Urach's craggy height,
Where many a robber-baron bold
Fought many a lawless fight,—
Though now the brawler and the brawl
Are in oblivion, one and all.

III.

But pilgrims, as they climb the hill
To overlook the vale,
Repeat the name of Frischlin still,
And tell the piteous tale
Of how the captive singer sweet
Loved Swabia, and loved Marguerite.

IV.

That was his country; this, his wife;
For, with a lover's oath,
The poet pledged his heart and life
With equal vows to both;
And both he loved with equal fire,
And both he honoured with his lyre.

V.

Dame Marguerite had golden hair,
And when it was unbound
It streamed upon the windy air,
Or trailed upon the ground;
Or if she braided it instead,
It four times wound around her head.

VI.

She was a matron fair to see,
A wife whose heart was kind,
And (as a poet's mate should be)
A comrade of his mind ;
And often by the mountain-brook
They sat and read the self-same book.

VII.

For whether it were Christian tome,
Or Talmud of the Jew,
Or pagan lay of Greece or Rome,
Or fable old or new,
Yet side by side they read the scroll
Till twain grew one in mind and soul.

VIII.

Fate severed them by bolt and bar,
By stony wall and door ;
For luckless was a poet's star
Who smote, in days of yore,
His ringing harp with daring hand
Against the tyrants of the land !

IX.

Brave Frischlin, with a soul free-born,
Defiant of his fate,
And ever answering scorn with scorn,
And rendering hate for hate,
Cared little how his word might sting
The duke, the margrave, or the king.

X.

Though others cringed, and others knelt,
And others wore the yoke,
Yet *he* was of the few who felt,—
And *he*, the one who spoke ;
—But woe to one whose wit is free,
And speaks against the powers that be !

XI.

A tongue that smiteth like a sword,
What despot can endure ?
The poet lashed each haughty lord
Who trampled on the poor !—
And since he told the truth so well,
They bade him tell it in a cell !

XII.

His dungeon was not underground,
But half-way up the sky ;
Nor needed it a moat profound,
Since from his window high
He watched the cattle come and go
That browsed a thousand feet below.

XIII.

Imprisoned in the upper air,
He wistfully looked down
Until the dame with golden hair
Looked upward from the town ;
And ever as their glances met,
They knew each other's eyes were wet.

XIV.

The livelong summer rolled away,
And wintry tempests blew,
And flying clouds made dark the day,
And hazes hid the view,
And weary grew each lover's lot,
Who gazed, yet saw each other not.

XV.

A day and night there fell a snow
That drifted in its fall
Till all the ledge that lay below
The lofty castle-wall
Was hid in drifts a fathom deep,
That feathered all the jagged steep.

XVI.

The captive, from his lofty tower,
Looked out upon the night
And saw in such a stormy hour
A happy chance of flight;
For what will not a captive dare,
Inspired by frenzy and despair?

XVII.

The scanty blankets of his bed,
He tore with teeth and hands;
And, strip by strip, and shred by shred,
He tied them into strands,
And twined the strands into a rope,—
Whereon to hang a prisoner's hope!

XVIII.

The sentries, as they paced their rounds
Upon the ramparts high,
Or as they paused to hear the sounds
Of gusts that rattled by,
Heard not the prisoner's muffled stroke,
Who beat his bars until they broke!

XIX.

Nor saw they on the dangling cord
The prisoner's dauntless self,
Who swung to every gust that roared
Above the rocky shelf,
And tried in vain to find a place
For foothold on its slippery base!

XX.

The line had either lacked the length
To reach the jutting edge,—
Or else had frayed away its strength
Against the cutting ledge,—
And so—too fragile for his weight,
It broke, and dropt him to his fate!

XXI.

From rock to rock he slipt and fell,—
Down, down a thousand feet,—
Till, at the bottom of the dell,
The snow,—his winding-sheet!—
That whitened round him as he went!—
With many a blood-stain was besprent.

XXII.

And peasants say, there since have grown
Strange flowers upon the spot;—
And many a maiden comes alone
To see but pluck them not;—
And when she hears the wind go by,
She calls it Marguerite's sad sigh.

XXIII.

A crumbled heap of stones and lime
Are Urach's castle-walls,—
A beauteous ruin,—as in time
Shall be all tyrants' halls!—
And nought preserves the castle's fame
Except alone its captive's name!

XXIV.

The singer perished, but his song,—
As of a mountain-bird!—
Went on re-echoing loud and long,
And through the land was heard,
Till they who heard it, rose and broke,
In Freedom's name, the tyrant's yoke!

XXV.

What nobler soul on Earth can be,
Or in the Heavens above,
Than one who lives for Liberty,
And one who dies for Love?
And since this nobleness was thine,
Accept, O Bard, this lay of mine!

THE ARTLESS ART.

I.

I SANG my lady many a lay
To win her by the music in it,
But word and tune were thrown away
Till, haply on a morn in May,
I chanced to hear a singing linnet.

II.

Now many a bird of brighter coat
May plume himself on his apparel,
But never in a warbler's throat
Was trilled a more enchanting note
Than quivered in that linnet's carol.

III.

'O tiny, passion-tortured thing,
Thy song,' quoth I, 'hath all its rapture
Because the wooing-time of spring
Is on thee now, and thou dost sing
Thy velvet-mantled mate to capture.

IV.

'With such a song, O bonny bird,
If I could sing it half so sweetly,
Then, haply, if my lady heard,—
Her stony bosom would be stirred,
And I would win her love completely!

V.

'So I implore thee to impart
Unto thy ruder brother-poet,
The secret of the songful art
To charm a lady's haughty heart
Till on the singer she bestow it.'

VI.

'No art is mine to tell thee of,'
The songster said, 'for I disdain it!
Go ask the robin—ask the dove—
Ask every bird that sings of love!—
We feel it, but we never feign it!

VII.

'Then go and woo as song-birds do,
Who, from the seed-time to the sickle,
Love faithfully the season through,
Nor change the *old* love for a *new*,
Nor prove (as men do) false and fickle!

VIII.

'Forbear a poet's fatal pride
In praising every charmer's beauty,
But ever to thy chosen bride,—
To her alone, and none beside,—
Sing thou a song of love and duty.'

IX.

—On that same day, with hope elate,
Beneath an arbour green and shady,
To that same maid who held my fate,—
Like that same linnet to his mate,
I sang my lay, and won my lady!

FRITZ OTTOCAR'S FELLOW-HUNTSMAN.

(In Saxon Switzerland.)

I.

I WONDER what keeps my comrade?
The daybreak is all aglow!
Once more I will blow my bugle—
O ho! tally-ho! O ho!

II.

He never has been a laggard,—
For, into the forest dim,
How often I thus have started
At peep o' the light with him?

III.

He wingeth the truest arrow
That ever a mountaineer
Sent out of a cross-bow, whizzing
With death to a dappled deer.

IV.

Why pipeth he back no answer?
He maketh no sound nor sign!
I hear tally-ho in echo—
But echoing only mine.

V.

Whenever he blows his bugle
It sounds in the stilly morn,
Across from the graveyard yonder,
Like Gabriel's Judgement horn!

VI.

He never till now has failed me!
I wonder if he be dead?
What hunter, on such a morning,
Would squander an hour in bed?

VII.

The river is frozen solid!—
The deer will be down to drink
From holes in the ice at sunrise—
A chance for a shot, I think!

VIII.

A beautiful crust, so crispy,
Comes once in a life, I say!
What spell has bewitched my comrade
To fool such a chance away?

IX.

By Juno! I now remember!
He yesterday took a bride!
She tangleth him in her tresses—
She bindeth him to her side!

X.

A woman can bind a fetter
Too strong for a man to rend!—
My comrade is now a captive
In bondage that cannot end!

XI.

A man is a fool to marry—
He never can come nor go!
But hark! It is he! I hear him!—
O ho! tally-ho! O ho!



FLUTE AND LUTE.

I.

A LOVER, with flute,
And a lady, with lute,
Sat playing in discord together;
And the wind rose high
In the cloudy sky,
And winterish was the weather!

II.

‘If it be love’ (sang she)
‘If it be love,
Tell me, Is thine
Equal to mine?
—Give me some sign,
If it be love.’

III.

‘If it be love’ (piped he)
 If it be love,
 Keep it at rest
 Deep in thy breast,
 —Asking no test,
 If it be love.’

IV.

Then, sweeter than lute,
 And softer than flute,
 Their lips came close together ;
 And the clouds rolled by,
 And blue was the sky,
 And sunshiny was the weather !

*THE KING'S WAGER.*

Silesia, A.D. 1305.

I.

THE King, though fond of fighting,
 Yet wished his wars to cease,
 And said to all his nobles,
 ‘I go to make a peace !

II.

‘The Duke,—our haughty neighbour
 Against whom we contend,—
 Must yield to us his daughter,
 And call us son and friend !

III.

‘Then shall the father’s dukedom
Go with the daughter’s hand,
And peace shall knit our borders,
And joy shall fill our land !

IV.

‘But since to our petition
The Duke her hand denies,
I go to seek the maiden,
To woo her in disguise !

V.

‘They say she mopes and muses,—
And sighs, and dwells apart,—
And turns away her lovers,—
And keeps a virgin heart.

VI.

‘But what should make a maiden
Thus sit and muse and mope ?
Not love, and yet a longing !
Not love, and yet a hope !

VII.

‘Why should the Duke’s fair daughter
Climb to her tower and sigh,
Save that her one true lover
Hath not yet ridden by ?

VIII.

'*Who* is her one true lover?
What prince of high degree?
A faith is born within me
That *I* alone am he!

IX.

'A thousand crowns I wager
That she is wooed and won,
And joins to-night our wassail
Before the feast is done!

X.

'Prepare ye well the banquet!
Bring costly cates and wine!
The dukedom and the daughter
To-night shall both be mine!

XI.

'Lead forth my saddled stallion,
For I this morn must ride
Full forty miles ere noon-day—
To woo and win the Bride!'

XII.

—They brought his red-roan courser,
A noble Arab steed,
That snorted to his rider,
Who spurred him to his speed.

XIII.

Through highway and through by-way,
From hill-top unto plain,
The stallion bore a rider
Who never checked the rein.

XIV.

Quoth man and maid who saw them,
'Who is it rides so fast?'
For little thought the gazers
It was the King who passed.

XV.

He wore a minstrel's mantle,
He bore a minstrel's lyre,
And in his eyes of azure
He showed a minstrel's fire.

XVI.

—High stood the sun in heaven:
It was the noon of day:
Around the Duke's strong castle
The shortened shadows lay.

XVII.

The minstrel at the postern
Knocked loud and waited long,
Before the Duke's fair daughter
Would listen to his song.

XVIII.

At last, at his beseeching,
She let the wanderer in ;
But then she blushed with anger
To hear him thus begin :

XIX.

'O fairest of fair maidens,
Men say thy heart is hard ;
Thou scornest high-born wooers ;
So hear a low-born bard !

XX.

'My heart is broken !—bleeding !—
All for my love of thee !
In day-dreams and in night-dreams
Thou comest unto me !

XXI.

'Thou comest not an angel
From chill and distant skies,
But as a mortal maiden
With passion in thine eyes !

XXII.

'The midnight and the morning,
The evening and the noon,
Are lighted by thy beauty—
Not by the sun and moon.

XXIII.

'Love burneth in thy bosom,
A quenchless vestal fire,—
And *I* am come, thy lover!
And lord of thy desire!

XXIV.

'Chide not the poet's frenzy,
Nor think the minstrel crazed,
For just as on thy beauty
I in my dreams have gazed,—

XXV.

'So by this sign and token
I know that thou of me
Hast had thy dreams and visions,—
And our two fates agree!

.

XXVI.

'Why standest thou in wonder?
Why dost thou tremble so?
Think not of rank and station!—
Think not of high and low!

XXVII.

'What though thy blood be noble,
And *I* be humbly born?—
Shall then a poet's passion
Yield to a lady's scorn?

XXVIII.

'Thou dwellest in thy castle—
I wander on the moor ;
But love, like God who made it,
Knows neither rich nor poor !

XXIX.

'Although the King should woo thee,
And ask thee to his throne,
Yet *I* alone shall win thee—
Yea, lady, *I* alone !

XXX.

'Stamp not thy foot in anger !
Turn not thy head aside !
Wert thou the Queen of Sheba,
Still thou shalt be my bride !'

XXXI.

She mocked with merry laughter ;
She knit her brows and frowned ;
She blushed, and sighed, and pondered,
And gazed upon the ground.

XXXII

'Go hence, audacious singer !
Come hither never more !
Thy song awakes my sorrow—
My heart hath long been sore.

XXXIII.

‘But though I dream at midnight,
My dream is not of thee;
My state is high and princely—
And so my lord must be.

XXXIV.

‘Thou art a wandering minstrel,
And though thy song be sweet,
How could I love a lover
Whose love were so unmeet?’

XXXV.

—His lips grew white with passion,
His eyes grew black with fire!
—Down on the marble pavement
He dashed his quivering lyre!

XXXVI.

The fragile thing was broken;
The strings were snapt in twain;
And then the frenzied minstrel
Woody in a fiercer strain:

XXXVII.

‘O thou elect and chosen,
Whom I have long adored,
Fly hence with thy true lover,
Fly now with thy true lord!’

XXXVIII.

He claspt her to his bosom ;
She trembled, half afraid ;
For never low-born wooer
So wooed a high-born maid.

XXXIX.

She knew not what to answer,
And tried to answer nay,
But ere her lips could say it,
He kist the word away.

XL.

He kist her, and he kist her,
And ever as he kist,
There gathered on her eyelids
A dim and blinding mist.

XLI.

The minstrel was a tempest,—
The maid, a lily-flower
Whose haughty head was humbled
Beneath the wild wind's power !

XLII.

She bent her head !—She gave him
The lily of her hand !—
She mounted with the minstrel
To seek his own far land !

XLIII.

One steed bore both the riders,
And furious was his pace;
One cloak wrapt both the lovers,
Who rode in close embrace.

XLIV.

And thrice a league they galloped,
And thrice a league yet more;
The sun went down behind them,
The moon rose up before.

XLV.

The stars, with timid twinkle,
Came struggling into sight;
And on the red-roan courser
The foam was snowy white.

XLVI.

Through by-way and through highway,
From valley unto hill,
The horse failed not his riders,
But galloped, galloped still.

XLVII.

Quoth man and maid who saw them,
'Who is it rides so fast?'
And little thought the gazers
It was the King who passed.

XLVIII.

And little knew the lady,
Nor even dreamed or guessed
How royal was the lover
Who held her to his breast.

XLIX.

Quoth she, 'The ride is weary,
The night is waxing late!'
Quoth he, 'The ride is ended—
Here halt we at our gate.'

L.

It was a frowning portal,
As huge and grim and old
As if a hundred monarchs
Had made it their stronghold.

LI.

—'And is it to a dungeon
That thou thy Bride dost bring?'
—'Not so, my love, we enter
The palace of the King!

LII.

'For here the King is keeping
His wedding-feast to-night,
And many a flute is playing,
And many a lamp is bright.

LIII.

'Yet what avails the music,
Or dance, or all beside?—
The wedding-feast still lacketh
The Bridegroom and the Bride!'

LIV.

—The Palace-gate swung open
At word of his command,—
No more a wandering minstrel,
But monarch of the land.

LV.

From hall to hall resounded
A merry mad uproar!
'The King! the King!' they shouted,
'The King is at the door!

LVI.

'The King hath won his wager!
The King hath brought his Bride!'
—And half a hundred nobles
Pressed to the lady's side.

LVII.

Then down they knelt before her,
And kist the soft white hand
That brought the boon and blessing
Of Peace to all the Land.¹

¹ To look for a strict historical foundation for this ballad would be like searching into the authenticity of the adventures of King Cophetua, or into the identity of the Lord of Burleigh.

MICHEL - ANGELO BUONAROTTI

TO

THE PRINCESS COLONNA,

On the occasion of his finishing, for her tomb, a miniature of her face and bust, in ivory, which he had begun before her death.

THIS image of thyself, I bring to thee—
O thou, my dream of dreams, for ever past!
Thy beauty was too beautiful to last!
How could so fair a being cease to be?
But what is life except an almond-tree,
That blossoms early, and that withers fast?
—The day I lost thee, how I stood aghast!
—But no! thou never shalt be lost to me!

O perfect brow, as Greek as Hera's own!
O shining eyes, brighter than aught they saw!
Goddess thou wert, and Goddess shalt remain!
Immortal spirit! With a lover's moan,
Here on thy hallowed urn, with chilly awe,
I lay my love-gift,—late, and now in vain!



EBERHART IM BART.

(Or, 'OF THE BEARD.')

Württemberg, A.D. 1445-1496.

I.

IN Urach's ancient ducal hall
There hangs a portrait on the wall,
Of Swabia's Duke, the loved—the feared —
The hero of the mighty beard—
The beard renowned in Swabian song
As having been a half-mile long—
Great Eberhart Im Bart,
Pride of the Swabian heart.

II.

He was the Duke who, when denied
Chief place at Council-board, replied,
'My lords, this petty, poor debate
Postpones the business of the State;
If *you* will do some useful thing
To serve the Country and the King,
I am content, by Jove,
To sit behind the stove!'

III.

He was the Duke whose pious spouse,
Big Barbara of his faithful vows,
By heaven and earth was marvelled at
For growing so in grace and fat,
That when she went to church to pray
It took a dozen carls, they say,
Or score, or thereabout,
To lift her in and out!

IV.

He was the Duke who killed the Boar
Which none had dared attack before,
Till in a wild and lonely place,
Unarmed, he met him face to face,
And smote him as with Samson's fist,
And wrenched his jaw with such a twist
That he the monster slew
(If either tale be true !)

V.

He was the Duke who gave renown
To Tübingen's time-honoured town,
Wherein he fixed the classic seat
Where Swabia's students daily meet,
And where, in meeting, ere they part,—
In memory still of Eberhart
Each day of all the year
They swig their Swabian beer !

VI.

He was the Duke who laid his sword
Upon the Tomb of Christ the Lord,
And vowed a vow as Christian Knight
To battle for the truth and right,—
To help the weak against the strong,—
To rid his realm of every wrong,—
And who, in letters fair,
Wrote on his shield, 'I DARE !'

VII.

He was the Duke whose narrow land
So broadened underneath his hand
That as his Coronet passed down
It grew and brightened to a Crown;—
Nor has there reigned in Swabia since
A King so royal as the Prince
 Who, with so small a State,
 Made it so proud and great.

VIII.

He was the Duke who made the boast
That he, without his armèd host,
Without his sword, without his helm,
Could ride alone through all his realm,—
And, if he chanced to lack a bed,
Could safely couch his weary head
 And sweetly take his nap
 In any Peasant's Lap.

IX.

He was the Duke whose Oaken Chair
With curious carvings, quaint and rare,
(Which pilgrims travel many a mile
To gaze at in the old church-aisle)—
Stands empty, and will so remain;
For Kings no longer rule but reign!
 —What Prince to-day is fit
 In such a Chair to sit?

X.

All hail the future age that brings
An end to Lords and Dukes and Kings!—
And welcome be the casting down
Of Sword, of Sceptre, and of Crown!—
Yet till the coming of the day
When these from earth shall pass away,—
If princes there must be,
Let them be such as he!¹

¹ Eberhart Im Bart (or 'with the beard') is the national hero of Swabia—the Washington of Würtemberg. He was born in the Castle of Urach, December 11th, 1445. At the age of fourteen he lost his father, who left the lad's uncle, Count Ulrich, to be regent of the county till young Eberhart's majority. But the ambitious boy—like the present King of Servia!—found a way to get hold of his inheritance before the time. He had an old head on young shoulders; and, acting as his own regent, he governed as a youth with the success of a man. Attaining his majority, he became a Crusader, and consecrated his sword at Jerusalem. On his return from the Holy Land, he founded in 1477 the University of Tübingen, which is, to this day, his living monument. In 1488 he was chosen the Chief of the Swabian League, an organization to promote the union and consolidation of the petty principedoms and bishoprics of the land into a central government. In 1495 he was created Duke of Würtemberg and Teck—an honour conferred on him at the City of Worms, amid great splendour, at the hands of the German Emperor Maximilian.

During the proceedings a feast was held at which the dukes, land-graves, margraves, and other magnates, were asked by the Emperor to relate the chief and crowning excellence of which their separate provinces could justly boast. Saxony vaunted its mines and metals; Bavaria, its cities and forts; the Rhine Palatinate, its vineyards and wines.

'Swabia,' said Eberhart, 'can brag of no such things; yet I, as its ruler, may more proudly claim that I can safely travel *in* it, and *through* it, by day or night, and if I should anywhere lack a bed, I could trust myself to go to sleep with my head in any peasant's lap.'

In 1496 Duke Eberhart died, and was buried in St. George's Church

THE SAILOR'S WEDDING.

I.

‘O LOITERING ship!’ a sailor cried,
‘Now speed me home to wed my bride!’
The ship, through flying spray,
Went bounding on her way.

II.

‘O midnight-bells! my watch is done!
O happy morrow, haste thy sun!’
Then down he lay and slept,
And in his dream he wept.

at Tübingen; and the Emperor Maximilian, on visiting the tomb, said, ‘Here lies a prince who was without peer in Germany—one in whose advice I always found wisdom and help.’

Duke Eberhart’s historic beard was red—like that of Frederick Barbarossa. It was probably not of excessive length, for a portrait of Eberhart, taken from life (a copy of which was, a few years ago, presented by the old Emperor William the First to the Castle of Urach), shows a beard of no phenomenal proportions. But tradition will probably always keep the Duke’s beard growing with his fame, and he is likely to be always called Eberhart Im Bart.

His Chair of State—made of oak and curiously carved—is kept in the Church of St. Amandus at Urach.

A legend exists among the credulous peasantry, who idolize his memory, that he will one day, on some national occasion, rise from his grave, and reappear in Swabia, redressing the grievances of the poorer classes. A reference to this superstition will be found in a lyric at page 356.

III.

He dreamed that suddenly the waves
Stood fixt and green,—like churchyard graves!—
And that a requiem-bell
Ceased nevermore to knell!

IV.

'Land ho!' the deck-watch called, with cheers:
The sleeper wakened from his tears:
'O happy morn,' he said,
'This day shall I be wed!'

V.

But when at last he leapt ashore
And ran to Mary's cottage-door,—
And shouted Mary's name,—
No voice in answer came!

VI.

The neighbours, gathering at the sound,—
All stood in ominous silence round!
'Good people, *where*,' he cried,
'*Where* is my bonny bride?'

VII.

'Thy bonny bride,' then answered they,
'Awaits thee,—all in white array,—
With flowers upon her breast!—
But in her grave at rest!'

A BALLAD OF A BABY.

The Wartberg, A.D. 1307.

I.

IT was all a hurry-scurry !
Duke and Duchess in a flurry !
For at last, with hope forlorn,
They had fled—O tale of pity !—
From their sacked and burning city
With their little babe new-born.

II.

When Duke Friedrich,—sore defeated,—
With his flying troops retreated
Through the Neckar's winding vale,
And the foe pursued for slaughter,—
Up from Friedrich's baby-daughter
Rose a faint and moaning wail.

III.

'Now what ails the little being ?'
Quoth the sire, as they were fleeing,—
Fleeing wildly, hotly pressed ;
And the mother answered, sighing,
'Ah, the little thing is crying,
For she needs her mother's breast.'

IV.

Down the Duke from saddle vaulted,
Shouting, 'Let the troops be halted!—
Let the Furies do their worst!—
Let the country-folk betray us!
Let the conquerors find and slay us!
But the Baby shall be nursed!'

V.

So within a shady hollow,—
Though the foe was soon to follow,—
And to tarry was to die,—
Horse and rider stopt to water,
While the little ducal daughter
Drank her milky fountain dry.

VI.

The pursuers would have chuckled
Had they seen the baby suckled,
But they rode another way,
And they never set their clutches
On the happy Duke and Duchess,
For the Baby saved the day!

VII.

Then the fugitives, though routed,
Yet escaping, laughed and shouted;—
And they vowed, amid their joy,
That the babe, for that day's merit,
Should the ducal crown inherit
Just as if she were a boy!

VIII.

When at last the child so tender,
Who had been the land's defender,
Was a peerless woman grown,—
Not a flounced and sighing charmer,
But an Amazon in armour,
She was Duchess on the throne.¹

¹ Duke Friedrich was a Thuringian of the House of the Hohenstaufen. He married Elizabeth, daughter of his father's mistress. Both women were noted for their beauty, but the daughter so outshone her mother that Horace's famous compliment might have been written expressly for the pair. The Duke was of gigantic stature, as is proven by his huge armour, which is still preserved in the Wartberg. He was besieged by Albrecht, and had to flee from the Wartberg, but the tide of war afterwards turned in his favour, and he recovered his lost lands.

The historical basis for the ballad is given by Rohte as follows :—

'Friedrich was driven from the Wartberg with his new-born daughter, who cried incessantly during the flight. Although the enemy was close at hand, the Duke stopt and asked the nurse what ailed the babe? The nurse replied, "My Lord, she will not be quiet until she is suckled." So he ordered his men to halt, saying, "My child shall have her desire though it cost me all Thuringia"; and, drawing up his men in front, remained by his babe's side until she had been suckled.'

EXPIATION.

FAIR lady, if the heedless asp that stung
The love-lorn Egypt to her welcome death,
Had known whose heart it was to which he clung,
Or what a queen he pilfered of her breath,
He would have stung his venom'd self instead,—
As other serpents do ;—and so will I ;—
For since, O queenlier queen !—since thou hast said
That I have wound my serpentining way
To thy imperial heart, to sting and slay,—
I make to thy reproaches this reply :
Not thou, my queen,—but I, thy worm,—shall die !
I spare the bosom where I lay my head !
Farewell ! Live *thou* ! But *I*,—self-stung,—am dead !

PRINCE AND PEASANT.

I.

THE King of Bernicia, while hunting,
Saw neither a fox nor a boar,
But startled a fawn in the forest,
Who timidly ran before ;
And this was the forester's daughter,
Who fled to her father's door.

II.

The heart of her royal pursuer
 'So throbbed with a rapturous beat
That, after the manner of lovers,
 In token of homage complete
He knelt on the threshold before her,—
 A prince at a peasant's feet.

III.

'O goddess,' quoth he, 'what mortal
 Can beauty like thine withstand?
For wilderness, river, and mountain
 Have moulded thee wild and grand!
So *I*, who am King of my kingdom,
 Sue here for thy heart and hand!'

IV.

The virgin, all mute with marvel,
 Stood motionless like a tower!
And all through her cheeks ran changes,
 Like flushes that streak a flower!
And merely a moment of silence
 Seemed, all of a sudden, an hour!

V.

The forester spake for his daughter:—
 'My liege, she is lowly born;
No dowry is hers for a portion,
 No jewels a bride to adorn;
Thou wooest to mock, not marry—
 Thou speakest in jest, or scorn!'

VI.

Outwhipping his weapon in anger,
The Monarch replied with a frown,
'How darest thou brand me a jester,
Or liken thy liege to a clown?
A King, when he wishes his wedding,
May queen whom he will with his crown!'

VII.

Then down on her knees between them
The dutiful damsel bent,—
And up through her golden tresses
A glittering glance she sent,
That seemed like a flying javelin,
And straight to their hearts it went.

VIII.

She cried to them, 'Cease your quarrel,
And bid me to love you both!
For *why* should a peasant's daughter
To marry a prince be loath?
O father, I plead for thy blessing—
O lover, I plight thee my troth!'

IX.

The King, though in Lincoln doublet,
As green as a summer elm,—
With neither his crest nor armour,—
With neither his crown nor helm,—
Yet looked as the Lord's anointed,
And Sovereign of the realm!

X.

'The gift of a woman's beauty
Must come from the gods,' quoth he ;
'But as for an earthly honour,
And as for a high degree,—
A King to a carl may give it !
Thy father a lord shall be !

XI.

'For nature has made him noble,—
And here, in his daughter's sight,
I whack him upon his shoulder
And dub him a noble knight !—
An honour that, save in ballads,
Falls rarely upon a wight !'

XII.

The Monarch embraced the maiden,—
And each to the other clung,—
And never in any ballad
That ever has yet been sung,
Was ever so mad a marriage
Since time and the world were young !

XIII.

'My love,' said the royal lover,
'Thy father shall be an earl !
The earth, it shall give thee a ruby,
The sea, it shall give thee a pearl,—
And Heaven, it shall give thee a blessing,
O princess and peasant-girl !'

XIV.

The aisle of the old cathedral,
That up to the altar led,
Was strown for their feet with lilies,
And thither they walked to be wed,—
In presence of throngs of the living,
In presence of tombs of the dead.

XV.

The bride-cake was big as a mountain,—
And virgins from near and far
Put crumbs of it under their pillows
To dream of the lucky star
That dawns on a fortunate marriage—
(If marriages ever are !)

XVI.

For since they are made in Heaven
(Or certes the proverb is wrong)
Of course they so very rarely
To Earth,—or to mortals,—belong,
That perfectly-married people
Wed only in story or song !

XVII.

Now as to the truth of the ditty,
If doubters be hard to convince,
Or deem it so very unlikely
A peasant could marry a prince,—
Why, let them remember it happened
Some thousands of centuries since !

THE BARD'S LISTENER.

I.

I STRUNG my lyre
With golden wire,
And sung a song of pure desire.
—A maiden heard,
Whose heart was stirred,
Until her bosom glowed with fire.

II.

'How can it be
That chaunt and glee
Have such a dangerous power?' quoth she,—
And stole away
My lyre that day,
And hid it under lock and key.

III.

'Why do you hide
My harp?' I cried.
'Because,' the blushing maid replied,
'I seek to know
Which thrilled me so,
The song or singer?'—and she sighed.

IV.

—The long day fled,
And back I sped
To ask, at eve, with hope and dread,—
'*Which* was it, pray?
The bard, or lay?'
—'I quite forgot you both!' she said.

THE FOUR SEASONS.

I.

IN the balmy April weather,
My love, you know,—
(When the corn began to grow)—
What walks we took together,
What sighs we breathed together,
What vows we pledged together,—
In the days of long ago!

II.

In the golden summer weather,
My love, you know,—
(When the mowers went to mow)—
What home we built together,
What plans we planned together,
What babes we watched together,—
While the skies were all aglow!

III.

In the rainy autumn weather,
My love, you know,—
(When the winds began to blow)—
What tears we shed together,
What hopes we lost together,
What graves we dug together,—
When we laid our darlings low!

IV.

In the wild and wintry weather,
 My love, you know,—
 (With our heads as white as snow)—
What fears we share together,
What prayers we pray together,
What Heaven we seek together,—
 For our time has come to go !

IN GOD'S ACRE.

I.

THOU art alive, O Grave,—
 Thou with thy living grass,
Blown of all winds that pass,—
Thou with thy daisies white,
Dewy at morn and night,—
Thou on whose granite stone
Greenly the moss has grown,—
Thou on whose holy mound,
Through the whole summer round,
Sweetly the roses thrive,—
Thou art alive !
O Grave, thou art alive !

II.

Answer me, then, O Grave,—
 Yea, from thy living bloom
 Speak to me, O green tomb,—
 Say if the maid I know,
 Sepulchred here below,—
 Say if the sweet white face,
 Hidden in this dark place,—
 Say if the hair of gold
 Buried amid thy mould,—
 Say, O thou Grave, her bed,—
 Is my love dead?
 O say, are the dead dead?

*THE DOUBLE STRATAGEM.*

Graf Gaffir of Antwerp was fond of boasting how he courted
 his Italian wife.

PAULINE shall fill your glasses,
 And as you sip your wine,
 I will relate a merry tale
 Of how I made her mine.

II.

I knew that she was haughty,
 Like all her Tuscan race,—
 And every wooer grew abashed
 Who looked her in the face.

III.

So, pleading not my passion,
Lest she should flout the flame,—
I sent my love a lover's gift,
But signed a stranger's name.

IV.

It was a blood-red ruby,—
So full of love's own fire
That well I knew the woman's wit
Would guess the man's desire.

V.

If she received my token,
Her breast would burn to know
Who was the giver of the gift?—
What lover loved her so?

VI.

We met. Quoth she, 'A stranger—
Whose name is—(let me see—
I think he writes it Valentine)—
Hath sent a gift to me.'

VII.

Quoth I, 'He is my comrade—
A sad and love-sick bard!
He loves thee well, O lady fair!—
Alas, his fate is hard!'

VIII.

'Thy *comrade*? Send him hither!—
But come not as his guide!—
For I a message have for him,—
For him, and none beside!'

IX.

'Nay, *write* thy message, lady!—
Sit here and write it down!—
And I will bear it as thy page,
And seek him through the town.'

X.

'What? write my bosom's secret,
And trust the scroll to thee?
Go, trifle, get thee hence with speed,
And send thy *friend* to me!'

XI.

I left her!—and I curst her!—
Herself and all her tribe!—
Yet I returned to her, disguised
As Valentine, a scribe!

XII.

Quoth she, 'Take back thy jewel!—
My heart is not my own!—
My heart is his who sends thee here!—
O why is *his* a stone?'

XIII.

I dropt my cloak and visor—
I claspt her to my breast—
I kist her madly, mouth to mouth—
I need not tell the rest.

XIV.

See how Pauline is blushing!—
She blushes like the wine!
—What if she had said *no* to *me*,
And *yes* to Valentine?



THE CHAMOIS-HUNTER.

I.

AT eve, from the Altorf valley
Young Otto must pick his way
And climb to the Alpine summit
And wait for the break of day.

II.

(For he who would hunt the chamois
Must start from the vale at night,
And creep to the cliffs ere morning,
To hunt at the peep of light.)

III.

So kissing his love at sunset,
He left her upon the moors
(For lovers must have their partings
Albeit their love endures).

IV.

He kist her with burning kisses,
And folded her to his heart:
The sun in the west blushed crimson
At seeing them kiss and part.

V.

Young Otto looked down the valley
Ere darkness had veiled the land,—
While Agatha, in the twilight,
Stood waving to him her hand.

VI.

He lifted his cap, and swung it,
And shouted a loud halloo,
Till echoes themselves woke echoes
And trebled his long adieu.

VII.

So deathly a silence followed,
It seemed to him on the hill
No leaf was astir,—and even
His heart (as he thought) stood still.

VIII.

Alone in the Alpine forest,
Alone where the foxes fed,
Alone with the screeching night-owls,
He talked to himself and said :

IX.

‘The chamois are hard to follow,
And little the gold they bring,
But gold they must bring to-morrow
To buy for my bride a ring.

X.

‘Now hark ! In the village-steeple
How faint is the clock below !
It striketh the hour of midnight—
How far I have yet to go !

XI.

‘Beneath me the thorp is sleeping :
My darling,—how sleepeth *she* ?
She sleepeth with spirit waking !
She dreameth a dream of *me* !

XII.

‘Of *me*, and the fleet-foot chamois !—
The chase, and the dizzy leap !
She shrieketh my name in terror,
And starts in her tender sleep !

XIII.

'I would that as now she sleepeth,
My head on her bosom lay!
The nearer I climb to heaven
The further I am away!

XIV.

'The air on the cliff grows colder,
And whitens the rocks with frost!
A slip of my feet in climbing—
And life and its love are lost!

XV.

'Next Candlemas, at the altar,
Maid Agatha shall be mine,—
And there shall be songs and dancing,
And there shall be cakes and wine!

XVI.

'At last I am at the summit
Or ever the east is grey!—
With time for a snatch of slumber
From now till the break of day.

XVII.

'So here I will spread my blanket,
And here I will strike my fire:
How weary is he who wanders
Away from his heart's desire!

XVIII.

‘Ye shades of the Alpine forest,
That creep through the boughs of fir,—
Creep now through my drowsy eyelids,
And bring me a dream of *her*!’

XIX.

He slept, and he dreamed till morning,—
For soft was the mountain-sward,—
And love is the balm of labour,
And woman’s is man’s reward.

XX.

He slept on the topmost summit,
Nor woke when the sun arose,—
And there he shall sleep for ever,
Beneath the eternal snows!

XXI.

They feathered him as he slumbered,
Nor wakened him by their fall;—
And cold is the sheet that shrouds him,
And white is his burial-pall!

XXII.

Then down in the Altorf village
The people in wonder said,
‘Maid Agatha sews a garment
As if she were yet to wed!’

XXIII.

Maid Agatha sewed a garment
To wear at the altar-rail:
The robe was a bride's apparel!—
The veil was a wedding-veil!

XXIV.

Maid Agatha had her wedding,—
But not to the sound of mirth!
She wedded the Lord in Heaven,—
His sorrowful bride on earth!

XXV.

As daily before the altar
She takes with the nuns her place,
The villagers see (or fancy)
A glory upon her face!

XXVI.

They say that her prayers to Heaven
Rise part of the way and stop,—
To gather a grace from sorrow
Each day on the mountain-top!



DÎS ALITER VISUM.

I.

THE Gods, one morning, stooped to hear
The noises of this lower sphere,
And cried, 'O what a songful Earth!—
Yet what, to us, can be the worth
Of all these empty sounds that rise
As mortal music to the skies?'

II.

A Lark trilled forth his roundelay,
Just as an Ass began to bray.

III.

The scornful bird—(with the contempt
From which no singer is exempt)—
Cried out, 'O hush, thou stupid brute!
Thy pipe is such a wheezy flute
That people say, who hear thy strain,
Thou art be-addled in thy brain!'

IV.

The Ass,—though the rebuke was keen,—
Showed neither petulance nor spleen,
But meekly answered, 'If my ear
Can rightly judge of what I hear,
I think thy voice, O dulcet bird,
The sweetest that I ever heard!'

v.

This most magnanimous reply
 Was pleasing to the Gods on high,
 Who, when the Lark resumed his lay,
 Were heard,—for his reproof,—to say:
 ‘Think not thy haughty notes surpass
 The modest matins of the Ass!
 Thou singest well,—but all thy skill
 Is in thy quaver and thy trill:
 The music which the Gods love best,
 Is charity within the breast:
 Alas! how little do we find,—
 In bird, or beast, or human kind!’

*THE TWO LADDERS.*

BENIGHTED in my pilgrimage,—alone,—
 And footsore—(for the path to Heaven grew steep)—
 I looked for Jacob’s pillow of a stone,
 In hope of Jacob’s vision in my sleep!
 Then, in my dream, whereof I quake to tell,—
 Not up from Earth to Heaven, but O, sad sight!
 The ladder was let down from Earth to Hell!—
 Whereon, ascending from the deep abyss,
 Came fiery spirits who, with dismal hiss,
 Made woful clamour of their lost delight,
 And stung my eyelids open, till, in fright,
 I caught my staff, and at the dead of night
 I who toward Heaven and Peace had halted so,
 Was fleet of foot to flee from Hell and Woe!

THE PHANTOM OX.

Among the peasants of Pomerania it is a superstition that a Spectre, in the form of a White Ox, glides through their villages and farms, and that any person on whom he breathes will at once sicken and die.

I.

‘**W**HAT frightens you in from your play, my child?
Your cheeks are as white as snow!
Your lips are of ashes! your eyes are wild!
O why do you tremble so?’

II.

‘Dear mother, just now,—as I crossed the brook
For lilies along the brink,—
An Ox, with a deathly and ghostly look,
Came down to the stream to drink!’

III.

‘Instead of a creature of flesh and bones,
He seemed to be crystal-glass!
He showed through his body the trees and stones
And mosses and meadow-grass!’

IV.

‘And round me, and round me, he went and went,
Yet walked with so light a tread
That under his hoof not a harebell bent,
Nor violet bowed its head!’

V.

‘Nor cast he a shadow upon the ground,
Nor image upon the stream !
His lowing was fainter than any sound,
And stiller than any dream !

VI.

‘I quivered and shivered from limb to limb !
Too frightened to turn and flee !
The further and further I shrank from *him*,
The nearer he came to *me* !

VII.

‘My handful of lilies he sniffed and smelt !
His breath !—it was chilly and fresh !
His horns !—they were soft in their touch, but felt
Like icicles to my flesh !

VIII.

‘I chattered with cold ! and I burned with flame !
I called upon God and man !
I waited for help, but as no one came,
I took to my heels and ran !

IX.

‘I rushed through the water across the brook,
And high on the shelving shore
I stopt, and I ventured to turn and look,—
Not thinking to see him more !

X.

‘But straight in my wake he had crossed the flood,
And followed me up the bank!
The sight of him curdled and clogged my blood!
My spirit within me sank!

XI.

‘I hid in the rushes, O mother dear,
But swift as a whiff of air
He followed me there!—he followed me here!—
He follows me everywhere!

XII.

‘O mother, now drive him away, away!
He stands at the very door!’
—And down fell the lad in a swoon, and lay
Half dead on the cottage-floor.

XIII.

The mother,—bewildered, and dazed, and dumb,—
Could see but the empty air,
Yet knew,—if the Shadowy Ox had come,—
That Death was approaching there!

XIV.

Then pressing her darling against her breast,
She pillowed him on his bed:
The moon,—like a watcher,—was in the west:
The beautiful child lay dead!

PRINCE HEINRICH'S CARVING-KNIFE.

A.D. 1105.

I.

THERE never sat, before nor since,
At any festive board,
A carver like the Swabian prince,
Who carved with his keen sword

II.

Prince Heinrich, with his battle-brand,
And with his train of state,
Had come to claim Slavina's hand,—
But came an hour too late.

III.

It was old Cruco's wedding-day,—
Old Cruco's wedding-feast,—
The Rugian king, whose age (they say)
Was ninety-nine at least.

IV.

There was a difference, it appears,
Between the groom and bride,
Of something more than four-score years,—
And other things beside.

V.

The king drank deep, and dropt asleep,
With chin upon his breast,
And in his nap he failed to keep
An eye upon his guest.

VI.

Prince Heinrich for Slavina fair,—
 To gratify her wish,—
Carved with his sword a tit-bit rare,
 And dropt it on her dish.

VII.

The morsel which, with weapon keen,
 Amid the merry sport,
The Prince thus carved,—to please the Queen,—
 Was of no common sort.

VIII.

He carved it not from roasted ox,
 Nor suckling of the swine,
Nor ibex of the Switzer rocks,
 Nor salmon of the Rhine!

IX.

He carved no loin of fatted calf,
 Nor rib of boar or buck,
Nor breast of pheasant, cut in half,
 Nor wing of mallard duck.

X.

He carved while other guests caroused,
 Yet carved no bird nor lamb,
Nor aught that on the meadows browsed,
 Nor in the waters swam.

XI.

In spite of all the groaning board
 Slavina would have starved
Except for what Prince Heinrich's sword
 So deftly for her carved !

XII.

And hence the tale is yet to tell
 Of Heinrich's carving-knife,—
For Heinrich loved the damozel
 Just made a dame and wife.

XIII.

Though wedded, she was yet a maid,
 Fresh from the altar-rail,
All in her bridal robes arrayed,
 But paler than her veil.

XIV.

So though the bride sat down to dine,
 She tasted not a thing,
Nor cared for cutlet, chop, nor chine,—
 Nor fin, nor leg, nor wing.

XV.

'O beauteous queen, you do not eat,'
 Prince Heinrich said to her;
'Now here are many sorts of meat—
 Which cut do you prefer?'

XVI.

'The cut which I would relish best,'
The married virgin said,
'Is one a bride should scarce suggest,—
Cut off the bridegroom's head!'

XVII.

Prince Heinrich, without more ado,
Upleaped with sword in hand,—
Obeying like a lover true,
His lady-love's command!

XVIII.

He cut the head off at a blow,
And dropt it on her plate!—
But if she relished it or no,
The stories do not state!

XIX.

They only tell how Heinrich gained
The young queen for his wife,
And how her castle he maintained
With that same carving-knife!¹

¹ The King of the Rugii, Cruco, met his death at the hands of a neighbouring Swabian rival, Prince Heinrich, in a manner which the historian Menzel describes as follows:—

'Cruco's beautiful wife, Slavina, who was deeply enamoured of the youthful Heinrich, entered into a plot; and Cruco was deprived of his head at the banquet-table by a single stroke of the young prince's sword.'

THE HARP OF ANDREW MARVELL.

'And if we would speak true,
Much to the man is due

.
Who

cast the kingdoms old
Into another mould.'

MARVELL'S *Ode on Cromwell*, A.D. 1650.

I.

O MARVELL'S harp, I dare to wake
Thy silent strings for Freedom's sake,—
To sing how vain thy boast
Of Cromwell's conquering host!

II.

O Marvell's self, arise instead,
To warn the living by the dead,
How Freedom may be lost,
Though won at bloody cost!

III.

What! shall we here, in Freedom's Land,
Stamp once agen the bondman's brand
Upon the freeman's cheek,—
Yet ask him to be *meek*?

IV.

The Nation, puny in her might!—
Sent forth her lowliest to the fight,
Until by men enslaved
The free themselves were saved!

V.

But, O victorious State!—unjust,
Perfidious, false to Freedom's trust,—
Thy feet are trampling now
The men who crowned thy brow.¹

VI.

Before the Judge of all the earth,
Men hold an equal rank of birth,
An equal law of breath,
An equal dust of death!

VII.

O Freedom! bring with flying wing
The time when neither Slave nor King,
Nor yoke nor tyrant's chain,
Shall on the Earth remain!

VIII.

Meanwhile I lay thee on the ground,
O harp, nor smite thee to a sound,—
For in this evil day,
Vain is a poet's lay.

IX.

O let the tardy Earth remould
And cast anew her Age of Gold,—
When just a poet's song
Shall crumble down a wrong!

¹ Written in 1865, while as yet the American negroes, who had loyally served the North during the Civil War, had not received their citizenship and civil rights.

THE BROKEN VOW.

A WOMAN'S STORY.

(In Adsley Park.)

THIS spot is where we parted; and I think
That had he not turned back, to give the chain
That bound our hearts another golden link,
I might have suffered, when it snapt, less pain.

But parting here, he loitered in the lane,
Then stopt; and leaning on the garden-gate,
He whistled like a robin to his mate:
Till I, with merry mocking of his call,
Ran down to catch him at the garden-wall.

Uplifting both his hands, he seized a vine
And shook a storm of dew upon my hair:
Then spying roses near, 'O maiden mine,'
He said, 'I pluck for thee a bud so fair
That had it grown in any Eastern clime,—
Where Love is writ in flowers instead of rhyme,—
And were it folded, thus, within thy hand,
Mayhap a woman's wit would understand
That her departing lover hies to bring
With swift returning steps her wedding-ring!'

I heard—and trembled—and stood queenly crowned—
But cast my eyes, bewildered, to the ground,
And asked myself, How could it be that I,
So lowly-born, should mate with one so high?

I turned my face to brush away a tear.

He bent his head, and whispered in my ear,
'Dear love, my loitering feet, so loth to go,
Shall speed me back before this bud shall blow.'

He went. That day was like a golden dream
And he the light that set the day aglow,
And I the mote that floated in his beam.

Then on the marble mantel of my room
I placed the bud, and nursed it into bloom,
And kist the very thorns from day to day!

And yet the laggard truant stayed away!

At first I saw the calyx swell—and crack—
And break the promise of his coming back!

Then through the empty days I asked myself,
Why comes he not? At last the chilly shelf
Whereon the fiery petals fell had grown
Like sandal-wood for fragrance, or the stone
That Pilgrims kiss upon the Prophet's tomb.

Outspread like pages of the Book of Doom,
The leaves too sweetly told my bitter fate.

His feet returned not to the garden-gate;
His face I have not looked upon since then;
His name is written with the rich and great;
His fame is high among the famous men.

O Thou Who sittest on the Judgement Throne,
Forbid my heart to harbour human hate,
But henceforth let me trust in Thee alone!

THE PEDAGOGUE OF TIPPERARY.

A.D. 1732.

I.

OLD Conny O'Grattan, the teacher,
When ninety (or near it, forsooth),
Still fancied his wife to be living,—
Although she had died in her youth.

II.

Not only his children had children,
But *these*, in their order, had *theirs*;—
And now they were romping around him,
And piling a pillar of chairs.

III.

Yet little he seemed to be heeding,—
For, all in the midst of the play,
He called to his viewless companion,
And said, 'I have something to say:

IV.

'O dearer than Deedo of Carthage,
And fairer than Hillen of Troy,
I taught ye when ye were a Babby
And *I* was a Broth of a Boy.

V.

'They tell me that now ye are wrinkled;
But I, being totally blind,
See nivver a blot nor a blemish
In either yer face or yer mind.

VI.

‘How well I remimber the school-house,
With holidays twice in the week !
—But, childers ! ye make such a racket
I *can’t* hear yer grandmother speak !

VII.

‘The urchins, my darlint, are noisy,—
And hard to remimber by name,—
And seem to be constantly growing,—
But *ye* are for ivver the same !

VIII.

‘Ye nivver, my dear, were a truant,
But always a jutiful lass,—
And *I* was the lucky young masher
Who married the head of the class !

IX.

‘And now, as I drowse by the ingle,
I fancy,—I hardly know how,—
That *still* ye are one of the childers,
Instid of their grandmother now !

X.

‘The Virgil we studied together
Comes constantly back to my mind,—
For *I* have been always a bookworm,
And one of the wormiest kind !

XI.

'I nivver had patience with Hillen,
But Deedo was always to me,
O darlint, the beautiful image
Of what I found fairer in *ye* !

XII.

'For Hillen, the jade, was a viper,—
But *ye*, O my Broth of a Bride !'
—Yet here was the end of his story,
For here he fell back,—and he died.

*HARLEM HEIGHTS.*

(A Mid-Winter's Tale.)

I.

I WAITED ! Her sleigh-bells tinkled—
I winced ! for her sleigh flew by,
And frostily on me twinkled
A fire in her scornful eye !

II.

She looked as I oft had seen her,—
How pitiless, and how proud !
Yet, spite of her cold demeanour,
I lifted my hat and bowed.

III.

My puzzle at first was whether
She nodded her haughty head ;—
Or was it her ostrich-feather
That shook in the wind instead ?

IV.

Her fad was her dextrous driving,
And often she drove alone,—
And *I* had been long contriving
To make my devotion known.

V.

Now just as my pulse was heightened
At seeing her flout me so,
Her frolicsome horse grew frightened,—
Upsetting her in the snow !

VI.

I sprang to the screaming beauty—
(More beautiful in distress !)—
And did what I thought my duty—
(Exultingly, I confess !)

VII.

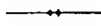
I chuckled to see her flounder
So deep in the feathery drift,—
And, folding my arms around her,
I gave her a loving lift !

VIII.

She chillingly chid my boldness,—
 And yet (it was plain to see)
 The snow was the only coldness
 Between the coquette and me !

IX.

She thawed,—and we had our wedding ;
 And ever since then my bride,—
 In even our hardest sledding,—
 Has wanted me at her side.

*CUI BONO ?*

‘ Who will show us any good ! ’

I.

SEE all the racers straining !
 What is the goal of strife ?
 The prize is worth the gaining—
 It is the Crown of Life !

II.

The trophy is a treasure
 That bears a varying name :
 The giddy call it Pleasure ;
 The noble call it Fame ;

III.

The lover calls it Passion ;
The miser calls it Pelf :
Each, after his own fashion,
Names it to suit himself !

IV.

Each, as his fancy styles it,
Grasps at it with a clutch,—
And seizing it, defiles it
With soilure in his touch !

V.

Or if no man may hurt it
With handling of his hand,
He yet may oft pervert it
From uses great or grand.‘

VI.

So what he deemed a blessing,
And panted to obtain,
Becomes, in the possessing,
Corroded to a bane !

VII.

The scholar finds it Folly ;
The miser, Carking Care ;
The lover, Melancholy ;
The profligate, Despair !

VIII.

So man's supreme ambition,—
His darling, chief desire,—
Is sure, on its fruition,
To cloy and pall and tire !

IX.

Instead of what he thought it,
He finds it but a cheat,—
And wonders why he sought it
With such a toil and heat !

X.

The winner winneth little,
The loser loseth less :
Each gets his jot and tittle
Of simple nothingness !—

XI.

Or worse !—for he may follow
Some bubble wondrous fine,
Not only void and hollow,
But mocking and malign.

XII.

And then some dire disaster
Befalls him soon or late,—
For *no* man is the master
Of what he calls his fate.

XIII.

He neither can foresee it,
Nor alter it a whit !
The Heavens alone decree it !—
He simply follows it !

XIV.

His course is not his choosing :
And if he miss the goal,
His anguish at the losing
Is wholesome for his soul.

XV.

So though the racer never
May win the wreath he would,
Yet still his best endeavour
Is of itself a good.

XVI.

The thrill is in the striving,
Not in the trophy won ;—
For, after the arriving,
The rapture all is done !

XVII.

The struggle, and the straining !
The sweat-drops, and the sighs !—
These !—and the hope of gaining !—
Are better than the prize !

XVIII.

So, not indeed to win it,
 But just to wage the strife,—
 This is the glory in it!—
 This is the Crown of Life!

*QUEEN MARY TUDOR'S LAMENT*

(Looking out on the Thames from her Palace-window at Greenwich,
 alone in her chamber.)

I.

I HAVE not had a wink of sleep,
 And now the dawn begins to peep :
 I shiver in its chilly ray :
 My Sweet, it is a bitter day!—
 And *thou* art far away!

II.

The boats, the barges, and the shore
 Are death-white,—for the frost is hoar :
 And all the wintry sky is grey :
 But still more bitter is the day,—
 Since thou art far away!

III.

Or what if summer's golden gleam
 Lay glittering now on yonder stream ?
 How could the year have any May?—
 For bitter still would be the day,—
 If thou wert far away!

IV.

I have a bud, but will it blow,
Or must it perish in the snow?
The Heavens deny me when I pray!
And now, in this my bitter day,
Thou too art far away!

V.

Some say that if a heart but yearn,
The absent feel it, and return!
Then I will *bring* thee!—by my fay!—
For O how bitter is the day
When thou art far away!

VI.

What is my sceptre or my crown?
Ye baubles, here I fling ye down!
Love is the one imperial sway!—
Until there comes the bitter day
When love is far away!

VII.

I rule my realm to work thy will!
My people hate me!—for I still,
With axe and faggot, burn and slay!
How then, in my so bitter day,
Art thou so far away?

VIII.

They warn me that my death is near !
I face it more with joy than fear !
 Why should I have a wish to stay ?
 What is my life ? A bitter day !—
 Thou being far away !

IX.

Here, in the frost-work on the glass,
I write thy name,—and yet, alas !—
 (Like *thee* !)—it is as cold as clay !
 How bitter dost thou make my day
 By lagging far away !

X.

What keeps thee from these arms of mine ?
Is it the tempting Spanish wine,
 Or is it some Duenna gay ?
 —Then sevenfold bitter is the day
 That lures thee far away !

XI.

O Jealousy, how keen thy dart !
But he who stings a woman's heart—
 Hath *he* no penalty to pay ?
 —O bitter be thy dying day
 For wandering far away !

XII.

But no, I curse thee not!—I cry,
Come back to me before I die!
 When *thou* commandest, *I* obey!
 Why art thou, on this bitter day,
 O truant, far away?

XIII.

What lover quits his lady so?
Thy heart was never mine, I know!
 Shall it be mine at last? O nay!
 I must abide the bitter day
 That keeps thee far away!

XIV.

Moan, O ye Winds, this winter morn!
My little Babe will not be born!
 Then come, O Death, without delay!
 Good-bye, O Earth, this bitter day,—
 For *I* go far away!



THE TOMB AT TÜBINGEN.

The dates on the hatchment are A.D. 1445–1496.

I.

THERE is at Tübingen a tomb
From which, with sudden start,—
Not waiting for the Trump of Doom,—
There shall arise, with cap and plume,
The great Duke Eberhart.

II.

What can the mighty errand be
That calls him from his clay?
'He comes in answer to our plea,
To set the groaning people free!'
—Thus do the peasants say.—

III.

'He ruled us once,—he ruled us long,—
He made us happy *then* ;—
For he was gentle, yet was strong ;—
And *now*, since things are going wrong,
We beg him back agen!'

IV.

Thus do they cry!—and they declare
That as their plea is just,
And as the Country needs his care,
The Duke will waken at their prayer!—
And come he will and must!

V.

The Duke,—when he shall come once more
 (Whose coming is at hand!)—
Will wear the same Red Beard he wore,
Which his battalions called of yore
 The Banner of the Land.

VI.

The wind would blow it like a flame!—
 And men in battle-line
Saluted it with loud acclaim,
And followed it to fields of fame,
 And conquered by the sign!

VII.

They conquered on the Alpine heights
 And in the Neckar's vale;—
And Swabians now, on winter nights,
Rehearse those fierce and bloody fights
 In many a fireside tale.

VIII.

And when they end their tales they say
 That while the Duke grew old
No hair of all his beard grew grey,—
Nor doth it in his tomb decay,
 Nor whiten with his mould:

IX.

But as he lies and takes his rest,
Clad in his mail complete,
His beard still blazes down his breast
And wraps his knees (together prest)
And reaches to his feet.

X.

His body moulders (as it must)—
And yet his spirit pure
Still sweetens (so they say) the dust
Of one revered by all the just,—
Beloved by all the poor.

XI.

So round his tomb a toiling race,—
For half a thousand years,—
Have prayed to Heaven to grant them grace
To be alive,—to see his face
When he agen appears!

XII.

Astir before the final day
That starts the other dead,
The Duke shall walk the King's highway,
And folk shall see him, and shall say,
'Who comes with beard so red?'

XIII.

The proud shall quake, but by St. Luke !
The humble shall wax bold,
And cry, 'It is the bearded Duke !—
Who walks the realm to give rebuke
To tyrants as of old !'

XIV.

It also is a tale they tell
That ere his tomb was hewn
He bade the builders build it well,
Lest he should burst the narrow cell
And rise a day too soon !

XV.

His rising will not be too soon !—
However soon it be !—
For is there not a written rune
That he shall bring the land a boon,
And set the people free ?

XVI.

The people must be freed agen
As they were freed of yore,
For now, O Fatherland, as then,
Thou hearest the complaints of men
Whose Freedom is no more !

XVII.

For is it Freedom when, as now,
In every smiling field,
The brawny peasant scarce knows how
To hold the handle of a plough,
But only sword and shield ?

XVIII.

O say, is Freedom just begun
Or now already past,—
When every rising of the sun
Sees moulded some new murderous gun,
Each deadlier than the last ?

XIX.

Is Freedom born of hellish hate ?—
A birth of sin and crime ?—
Do freemen best fulfil their fate,
In waging wars that decimate
By millions at a time ?

XX.

O Cross of Calvary, Thou art shamed,
And under curse and ban !—
Is not Thy honour touched and maimed
By every missile that is aimed
Against the heart of man ?

XXI.

Awake, O slumbering Duke, awake !
For now the people weep !—
The people groan !—the people ache !—
The people's hearts begin to break !—
How canst thou longer sleep ?

XXII.

—And when he wakes, O blessed day !
What will the Duke demand ?
'*Sheathe ye the sword !*' the Duke will say,
'And let the peasant go his way
To plow and sow his land !—

XXIII.

'*Sheathe ye the sword !* Why dally ye ?
Sheathe 'it, and let it rust !
Look, mine has rusted, as ye see !
The sword is but a tyrant's plea,
And not a people's trust !—

XXIV.

'*Sheathe ye your million swords !*—and then
Let all your spindles hum,—
Till Thrift shall gladden busy men,
And Plenty's Horn be filled agen !
—And this is why I come !'

XXV.

And hark ! the watchers at his urn
Now say with bated breath
That he for whom they wait and yearn
Begins at last to stir and turn
And waken out of death !

XXVI.

By many a token wild and weird
His rising is at hand !—
If not in flesh, with burning beard,
Yet as a mighty spirit, feared
By tyrants in the land !

XXVII.

Fling wide, O Tomb, thy marble door !
Deliver up thy clay !
Let not thy sleeper slumber more,—
For O the suffering Land is sore !—
Wake him To-day, To-Day !¹

¹ The legendary foundation for this ballad is mentioned in a footnote at page 309.

THE CLOWN'S CHANSONETTE.

(A Burlesque for the Kalamazoo Circus.)

I.

NOW listen to my ditty,
Ye Western belles and beaux!
No Eastern lays are like it,
From Pindar's down to Poe's!
The melody is nasal—
The subject is the Nose!

II.

O Muse, relate the reason
(There *is* one, I suppose)
Why all the Boston poets,
In all ~~their~~ love-sick throes,
Praise all a Lady's features
Yet never name her Nose!

III.

Her teeth (they say) are pearly;
Her eyes are like the doe's;
Her lips are each a ruby—
Her cheeks are each a rose;
Yet not a Yank remembers
Her necessary Nose!

IV.

Her hair is like the streamlet
That ripples as it flows ;
She has a natty ankle
Which naughtily she shows ;
She even has a nosegay—
But never has a Nose !

V.

The Muse replies that passion,
However much it glows,
Must never tempt the minstrel
Who sings a maiden's woes
To mention that her tear-drops
Go dripping off her Nose !

VI.

The poet at her pillow
May watch her in a doze,
And soften all her murmurs
To gentle ahs and ohs,—
Yet cannot let her sighings
Go sounding through her Nose !

VII.

Whatever tragic sonnet
The Harvard men compose,—
However high in horror
Their situation grows,—
Their Love may lie-a-bleeding—
But never at her Nose !

VIII.

O sacred Hill of Bunker,
When thy North-easter blows,
What chilly maid in Cambridge
Could lead me to propose,—
If, like the Sphinx of Egypt,
She had a knocked-off Nose?

IX.

O Beacon-street, thy bardlings
May chaunt thy furbelows,—
But Emerson and Longfellow
(And all such boys as those)
Were famous each for knowledge—
And famous each for Nose!

X.

I go my bottom dollar
(Alas! how fast it goes!)
That Christo. Col. of Palos
(Thus writ, for short, in prose)
And B. F. B. of Lowell—
Had each of them a Nose!

XI.

G. Washington I worship,
For walloping his foes!
I love the Pilgrim Fathers,—
All but their fogs and snows,—
But oh, I dread a Yankee
For drawling through his Nose!

XII.

Now I who sing this ditty
 Will bring it to a close
 By asking of each damsel
 In all the three front rows
 A kiss by way of payment
 For bringing her a Nose !

*LE JOUR DES MORTS.*

November the Second.

Une Causerie Esthetique.

—AND this is Père-Lachaise ?

—Yes, stranger, join this fête of ours !
 For on this day of days
 All Paris, every year,—
 Just as the leaves grow sere,—
 Comes to this hill-side here
 To deck the dead with flowers.

—And whose is this new tomb ?

—It is Bizet's.

—Then, O Parisians, heap it high with bloom !

Cover it thick with bays!
Let it be never found
Without some garland crowned!
The immortelle
Becomes it well!
Bring also bergamot,
And myrtle, and forget-me-not!
Cull all the flowers the season sends,
And pile them on this sacred stone
And look! O ye his friends,
I too, a stranger and unknown,
Bring these few columbines
And pinks and eglantines
As a poor tribute of my own.

—Welcome, O stranger, and *Vive l'Amérique!*
Continuez!
Perhaps you have a further word to speak
Of our Bizet.

—Well, then, ye Frenchmen, since ye have bedecked
(Too tardily, alas!)
The victim of your own neglect,
Now sit ye down upon the grass
(This hallowed grass which *he* is under)
And whisper to his stone,—as to a Sphinx,—
And ask it what it thinks
Of all the gay uproar,—
The shout, the cheer, the clapping of the hands,
And all the glad applause,—too long deferred,—
Now nightly heard,—
That shakes a hundred theatres with thunder,
And which in all the listening lands

Now more and more,
With wild *encore*,
Greets the Toréador?

—Yes, O American, your taunt is just!—
We feel the thrust!
For though at last we shout and cheer,
It is too late for *him* to hear!
Let us admit with shame
How much we are to blame!
We did not prize
Nor recognize
Our great musician while we still possessed him!
Yea, verily indeed,
We did him cruel wrong instead,
Till, if the spirit of a man can bleed,
His must have bled!
For we at first, with evil will,
All frowned upon him, scorned him,
Lampooned him, thorned him,
Stung him, bewildered him, distressed him,
And mocked his art,
And said, with howl and hiss,
'We will have none of this!'
And drove it from the stage,—
And broke his heart!
Yet now the Nations of the Earth
Have all acclaimed his worth,
And crowned him, honoured him, and blest him!
What a *furore*!
His drama which we tried to kill
Is now the rage!
It is a masterpiece, no doubt:

One of the brightest of the age,
And yet we bright Parisians,—
With all our tastes! all our traditions!
And all our intuitions!—
Could never find its merit out,
Nor guess the mighty labour it had cost him—
Until we lost him!
So, by St. Luke,
O stranger, we deserve your best rebuke!
Show us no pity!
We call our city
La Ville de Lumière,
Yet, by the Great Ramchunder!
We here and now
Blush to avow
That we have made a *double* blunder!
Too fond of martyrs, we have made a *pair*!

—And who are *they*?

—Why, poor Millet,
And, poor Bizet!

—Ye *martyred* them? Can this be true?

—Yes, stranger, we destroyed the *two*!
For *one* we starved, and *one*
We put to torture! Neither method new!
Such deaths we oft have done!—
And oft are like to do!
But when we saw that we had slain
The noble twain,
We hardly gave them time to die,
And to grow cold,

Before we proudly said,
'Since now they both are dead,—
Victims of ours!—
Let us melt bronze, and let us mould
To each his image! Let us set it high!
And let us crown it once a year with flowers!
And let us praise these martyrs to the sky!'

—Then, O remorseful throng, I know ye wonder
If on this mountain, and if in this mound,
This sleeper, in his sleep profound,
Can in some mystic way
Catch some re-echo of the sound
Of all the mighty plaudits, round on round,
Which Death and Time and Fate
Now join to pay
(Albeit late)
In homage to the minstrel underground!

—O stranger, tell us, *s'il vous plait!*

—Well, ye tomb-deckers, I reply:
What is a mortal turned to clay?
Does Death unto these dead of ours deny
All knowledge of the Earth wherein they lie?
What if, to those who die before their day,
The Giver of All Good
(To recompense them for a death too soon,)—
Should of His bounty mercifully give
Some far more blessed earthly boon
Than He bestows on those who live?
This, if He would,
Of course He could.

Now God is just!—
And if He made mankind
Out of the dust,—
Endowing their mortality with thought,—
He Who thus wrought
May also, of a dead man's dust, re-make
A dead man's brain,
And give it for its second dower
A new and nobler mental power,
Whereby it shall attain
To greater knowledge than it left behind :
Yea, I am half inclined
To fancy that our Ever-loving Lord,
Working a mighty miracle beneath the sward,—
May for the dead's own sake,—
And as a life's reward,—
Bestow upon a dead man in his grave
A seven-fold wit,
And a seven-times refined
And conscious mind !

For surely the Creator would not plan
To keep a soul of life in lesser things,
Yet snatch it from His noblest creature, Man !

Even the moth,—lured by the candle-light,—
Hath immortality upon his wings,—
In runic letters writ.

Our Father Odin gave, in days of old,
Even to gnome and elf,—
To pixie, troll, and fay,
And every sprite
That haunts the graveyard mould,—

The gift of sight
To see at night
As mortals see by day:
And shall He then from man withhold
Some all-illuming spark
To light him in the dark?—
Or shall our Maker from His dearest dead,
In their eternal bed,
Take all their living gifts away,
And banish hence
Each subtle sense,—
Each fine intelligence,—
And turn the chief of creatures to a clod?

—But, stranger, how can these things be?

—Well, I will answer! Look at yonder tree!
It is a yew:
God feeds it with the rain and dew:
Now if He makes the yew-tree thrive,
Can He not keep the dead alive?
The turf-clad and untroubled dead, I ween,
Are quite as living as the tranquil green
That garnishes their graveyard sod,
Or as the never-dying moss
That mantles yon immortal Cross!

Doth not the Crucified Himself,
Though He be God,
Yet yearn for human praise?—
For worldly tribute?—glory?—fame?—
And earthly honour to His Name?

And shall a mortal man who seeks the same,—
Not winning it until, at last,
His life is past,—
Be then forbidden to discern
The homage offered at his urn?

O ye proud mourners, no!
Ye have not hither brought
Your wagon-load of flowers for nought!

Death is not Fate: and how,—to men,—
Can death be *fatal*, then?

Your mouldering minstrel lying here below,—
Whom ye agen entomb
In this new mound of bloom,—
Knows well,—(O doubt it not!)—
What friends ye be, who come to-day,
And what ye bring to beautify the spot,—
Making November fairer far than May:
And I am sure
That now beneath this flowery pyramid,—
(So huge that half his monument is hid!)—
Yea, sure, thrice sure, am I
That he whom now these fragrant walls, piled high,
Thus sweetly re-immure,
Must thank ye with a heart most tender
For all the honours which ye render!

But, O ye flower-bestrewing throng,
Your garlands last not long!
So though both friend and stranger here lay down,
Each on this cenotaph, a wreath or crown,
Yet is your solemn rite,
Though rich, not ended quite.

—Well, O American, what more?

—Why then let saucy Carmen,—she whose name
Is of itself a song¹,—
And whose wild spirit makes the bull seem tame,—
I say, let the fierce damsel, with her gypsy throng,
And with her bold Toréador,
Her Matador,
Her Picador,
And all her choral train,—
Go singing their resounding score
Until, in echo of their strain,
The listening crowd, applauding, shall ring out
A joyous shout,—
So loud,—so clear,—
That it shall pierce this lily-covered stone,
And reach the Minstrel as he lieth here alone!
And let each night renew
The tireless mimic scene,
All tremulous with the trills of Spain,
And with the jingling tambourine,
And with the loudest breath
Of trump and fife,—
Till,—as the dead man's due,—
A thousand cities give him in his death
The plaudits which his own² begrudged him in his life!
And finally, good people, I avow
(For so I must!)
That if this bust
That crowns his dust

¹ *Carmen* is the Latin word for a song, hymn, or ode.

² Bizet was born in Paris.

Could open its bronze lips and speak,
Those lips would say,
(As well they may!)
That even as at first, so also now,—
Upon this flowery day,—
The Land where he is loved the best
Is in the West!—
A thousand leagues away!
So when ye shout to me, *Vive l'Amérique!*
I answer, *Vive Bizet!*



THE MONK'S MATIN.

(An Ungregorian Chant.)

I.

OUR night has vanished like a dream!
How fast the witching hours flew by!
The moon too kindly veiled her beam:—
We might have feared a clearer sky.

II.

We could not see each other's face,
For not a fire-fly lit his spark:
May Heaven forgive our mad embrace!—
For we were blinded by the dark.

III.

Within our garden of delight,
We thought the rose without a thorn ;
And so we snatched the flower at night,
Nor ever felt the sting till morn.

IV.

So sweet yet fleet was our content,
So free our love appeared of blame,
That would the midnight never went !—
And would the morning never came !

*DOGGEREL.*

(Disrespectfully addressed to the Dog that lives next door.)

I.

○ FRIEND of Man ! (for men themselves so name thee)
I, who apostrophize thee, love thee well ;
I never worry thee ; I seldom blame thee ;
But in the name of Heaven—(or no, of Hell)—
Why art thou, at the midnight hour,
Such a bow-wow-er ?

II.

Dost thou mistake me for a robber prowling,
That thou so loudly, and so late at night,
Dost wake the very watchman by thy howling,
And trick the town with dreams of dynamite,
Or crack of doom,—as brought to pass
By Turpin's gas?

III.

Why, when I quit some crew of late carousers,
And stagger zigzag on my homeward way,
Dost thou attack my newest pair of trousers,—
Until I find them, on the following day,
By reason of thy nip and tear,
Not fit to wear?

IV.

Thy heart, although humane, yet harbours rancour,—
Especially against the feline race;
And often I have seen thee itch and hanker
To cause the same to quit the quiet place
For which they had the most desire,—
Say, at the fire!

V.

It would delight me if some rat of vigour,
Sleek and sagacious, bold but not too bold,
Small like thyself, or just a trifle bigger,
Should wreak his will upon thee, and get hold
Of thy loud larynx in the dark,
And stop thy bark!

VI.

If Samson, when he stole the Gate of Gaza,
Had heard, upon that memorable night,
A dog like thee, upon a back piazza,—
The giant would have shivered with affright,
And would have cast his burden down,
And quit the town !

VII.

Thou art a tiny dog, yet most audacious ;
And very English in thy native growl ;
And not the Heavens themselves, though they are
spacious,
Seem big enough to hold thy horrid howl
Whilst thou, through all these nights of June,
Bayest the moon !

VIII.

Some say the human cranium, by its sutures,
Gives a clear tip of man's superior brain ;
But thy purloining,—at a neighbouring butcher's,—
Of his chief chine and cutlets,—makes it plain
That, as the Turkish 'sages say,
Dogs have their day !

IX.

Their *day* ! But shall they have their *night* ? By jingo,
I answer *no* !—with two d's, and a dash !
To lie awake and listen to their lingo
Makes town and Hamlet 'splenetic and rash' !
'Throw physic to the dogs,' as saith
The bold Macbeth.

X.

What physic shall I throw to *thee*, O bawler!
A dose of bootjack? or of cobblestone?
Thou art so small that scarce a dog is smaller,
And yet a noisier cur was never known!—
And just to hear thee, I declare,
Makes a saint swear!

XI.

If thou wert mine, and not my neighbour's puppy,
And I possessed the right to dust thy skin,
I, too, would show my teeth, and eat thee-uppy!—
And if agen thou nip me on the shin,
I know a little game of wit
Called Biter Bit!—

XII.

So on the Glorious Fourth,—when Yankee Doodle
And Hail Columbia are in fullest gale,—
I will tie Chinese Crackers, O thou poodle,—
A lighted pack!—suspended from thy tail!—
And dance thee off, with fife and drum,
To Kingdom Come!

TO THE GIRL GRACIOSA.

YOU little know yourself, my bonnie belle!
So in your Album I will take a page,
And being old, and privileged by age,
(Ere age forbid me—which I know full well
It shortly shall—for Time is fierce and fell)
I now will sketch you here: (though I engage
To pick such words,—so sober and so sage,—
That none shall guess I love you, Damozel!)

Then, bonnie belle, you have a heart so true,
A mind so pure, a wit of such a flow,
A laugh so catching, and an eye so bright . . .
But no—I stop—for what I meant to do
(Which was, to tell your virtues) is, I know,
What only an Archangel's pen can write!

*CARNOT¹.*

I.

○ WEEPING people, now at last his worth
Shines forth with glory in your sudden grief,
Till ye behold in him so grand a chief
That just his fall hath shaken all the Earth!

¹ These lines appeared in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* just after the assassination.

II.

Be proud! be proud! And while your heads are
bowed,
Thank the high Heavens that such a man as he—
As spotless as mortality can be!—
Hath now his praise ungrudgingly allowed.

III.

Heap up the Persian roses on his pall!
Bring every bud of Gulistán to-day!
Bring myrtle, ivy, and immortal bay!
Bring *fleur-de-lys*—the fittest flower of all!

IV.

Yea, *fleur-de-lys*,—the old Imperial Flower!
To tell the world how *he*, without a throne,—
Ruling in Freedom's simple name alone,—
Out-lilied Kings!—for Purity is Power!

V.

Give him his title!—Purest of the Pure!—
Who, with a Nation's wealth at his command,
Kept not a *sou* in his unsullied hand,
But spent his treasure on the sick and poor!

VI.

O sad Tri-Colour, wrapt in crape to-day,
A sister flag, three-hued, and draped like thine,
Hath paid such honours *twice*,—across the brine,—
To Chieftains martyred in the self-same way.

VII.

What mean these mysteries? What do they foretell:
Are they the omens of a Wrath to Come?
Hush! God is speaking! Let the Earth be dumb!
Is it not said, 'He doeth all things well'?

Paris, Monday, June 25, 1894.

*THE BABBLE O' THE BIRDS.*

I.

O SPARROW, say—
What saw ye in the wood to-day?
—I saw the Young Laird wi' a lass,
And they were lying in the grass.

II.

O Robin, tell—
Who was the Young Laird's damozel?
—She was the woodman's daughter Jean,
And tears cam tumbling frae her een.

III.

O Lark, declare—
What begged she of her lover there?
—Now tak me to the kirk, she pled,
And mak o' me a woman wed!

IV.

O Finch, how spake
The proud Young Laird o' Lomond Lake?
—He tossed his head, and said in scorn:
I winna wed a bride low-born!

V.

And what, O Wren,
Did the wild wood-nymph answer then?
—False love, I took your vow for true!—
And forth her pruning-knife she drew!

VI.

O Carrion Crow,
And what know ye of a' this woe?
—I snift the Young Laird where he lies,
And I hae just pickt out his eyes!

*PYRRHA.*

A PARAPHRASE.

(From the Latin of Horace.)

WHAT youth, with roses round his brow,
And sweetly-scented drops bedewed,
Makes love to thee, O Pyrrha, now,
Within thy shady solitude?

What victim is it to ensnare
That thou dost bind thy yellow hair
In braids so simple yet so fair?

The fool, whoever he may be,
Who sets his silly heart on thee
Shall find that never wooer wooed
A maid of such a fickle mood!

For thou art changeful as the skies :
At first he sees them azure-hued,
But then, before he is aware,
The elements are all at feud ;
A tempest suddenly is brewed ;
And thunders hurtles through the air!—
While he, fond wretch, stands shivering there,
With hopes storm-pelted and subdued,
And nothing left him but despair!

O luckless is the love-sick wight
Who trusts the troth which thou dost plight,
And whom thou flatterest to delude!

No sooner hath he knelt and sued,
And found thee gentle for a day,
Than he goes credulous away,
Till, with the next returning morn,
He hies him back to find thee rude,
And full of woman's wrath and scorn,
And boisterous as when Capricorn
Roars through his stormiest latitude!

I too have seen thy lightnings flash!
I too have heard thy thunders crash!
I too have felt thy wild waves dash!

But I (more blest by fate than he !)
Though badly drenched in that deep sea
Came safe (yet dripping) from the main,—
To hang in Neptune's sacred fane
My votive-offering on the wall,—
With thanks that I escaped at all !



THE KING OF THULÉ.

(From the German of Goethe.)

I.

THERE was a King in Thulé,
Faithful down to the grave !—
To whom his leman, dying,
A golden beaker gave.

II.

Beyond all other treasures
This love-gift did he prize !
And he never filled the goblet
But tears would fill his eyes.

III.

And when his days were ending,
He gave his heir the throne,
And the cities of the kingdom,—
And kept the cup alone.

IV.

And he made a feast right royal,
And with his knights sat he
In the high hall of his fathers,
In his castle by the sea.

V.

Then rose the old carouser,
With his last draught of wine,—
And he drained the hallowed goblet,
And flung it to the brine!

VI.

He saw it dip and glitter
And sink into the sea,—
And with it sank his eyelids,
And never more drank he!

SIR OLAF.

(From the German of Heine¹.)

I.

BY the porch of the Cathedral
Stand two men together, waiting:
Both are robed in scarlet raiment:
One the King, and one the Headsman.

¹ The object of this translation is to show the many changes in the metre of the original. These changes are here strictly followed.

And the King saith to the Headsman,
'From the psalm the priests are singing,
Now methinks the marriage finished—
Headsman, hold thy good axe ready!'

Clang of bell, and peal of organ!
Forth the folk stream from the temple!
Motley is the throng,—and, midway,
Come the bridal-pair, bejewelled!

Pale, and full of fear and anguish
Looks the King's all-bauteous daughter;
Bluff and blithesome looks Sir Olaf,—
And his red mouth, it is smiling!

To the King, who standeth scowling,
Saith the Knight,—with red mouth smiling,—
'Sire, thy son bids thee good morning!
Thou, this day, my head requirest!—

'I, this day, must die! O let me
Live the day through till the midnight,
That my nuptials may be honoured
With a banquet and a torch-dance!—

'Let me, let me live, I pray thee,
Till the last cup shall be emptied—
Till the last dance shall be ended—
Let me live until the midnight!'

And the King saith to the Headsman,
'To our son we grant a respite—
Let him live until the midnight!
Headsman, hold thy good axe ready!'

II.

Sir Olaf at the festive board
Drains the last flagon that is poured ;
His wife leans on him there
In white despair ;
And at the door stands the Headsman !

The waltzing begins,—and the Knight to his side
Clasps with wild passion his young bride !
The two,—as the torches glance,—
Dance the last dance !
And at the door stands the Headsman !

The blaring trumpets are loud and glad !
The flutes are pitiful, tender, and sad !
And to watch the dancing twain
Is to shiver with pain !
And at the door stands the Headsman !

And while they whirl through the echoing room,
'O beautiful bride,' saith the whispering groom,
'My love for thee cannot be told—
The grave is so cold !'
And at the door stands the Headsman !

III.

Sir Olaf, it is noon of night,
Thy life hath filled its measure !
Thou with the daughter of thy prince
Hast had forbidden pleasure.

The monks, with their murmurings, now begin
The prayer for the dead's redeeming ;
The man in red, by a block of black,
Stands with a white axe gleaming.

Sir Olaf strides to the Castle-yard :
The swords and the torches glisten :
Then speaketh the red mouth of the knight,
And laugheth at all who listen :

'I bless the sun, and I bless the moon,
And the stars that in Heaven glitter !
I also bless the little birds
That in the tree-tops twitter !

'I bless the sea, and I bless the land,—
And the blossoms in their blowing !—
I bless the violets,—like thine eyes,
So soft and yet so glowing !

'And though, for those violet eyes, my wife,
My body be rent and riven,
Yet also I bless the alder-tree
Where thou to me wert given !'



SECRET AFFINITIES.

A PANTHEISTIC MADRIGAL.

(From the French of Théophile Gautier.)

I.

FACING the blue Olympian sky,
Two blocks of stone lay wed on high,—
Crowning an antique portico,—
Joining their dreams as white as snow.

II.

When the Sea's tears for Venus fell,
Two pearls,—born in the self-same shell,—
Plunged to the depths, and told their love
In words not understood above.

III.

In Boabdilla's garden-walk,
Two roses,—blooming on one stalk,
And sprinkled by the self-same spray,—
Woored in a babbling, gabbling way.

IV.

In Venice, on a gilded dome,
Two doves,—pink-footed,—built a home,
And said, 'See how, with brood on brood,
Love is eternally renewed!'

V.

Marble and bird and bud and gem
Fulfil the doom decreed to them :
The pearl dissolves, the pigeon flies,
The marble falls, the rose-tree dies.

VI.

All the fair things that God hath wrought
He crumbles, crushing them to nought.

VII.

Back into Nature's stock and store
Their dainty dust is flung once more,
And through her crucible is passed,
And into fairer mouldings cast.

VIII.

By gentle metamorphose strange,
The marble takes a mystic change,
And quits its antique block, and now
Is moulded in a maiden's brow.

IX.

The pearls forsake their shell and brine,—
Making her mouth their nobler shrine.

X.

The roses,—which the frost-wind nips,—
Re-bloom upon her cheeks and lips.

XI.

The doves,—that from their nest depart,—
Fly back to flutter in her heart.

XII.

Thus, by a sympathy profound,
Two souls,—though severed,—yet are bound :
For unto each alike is known
The other's yearning by its own.

XIII.

Thrilled by a fragrance, hue, or ray,
An atom starts upon its way
And seeks its mate,—by the same power
That draws the bee to find the flower.

XIV.

Led on by some remembered dream
Of fane, or fount, or ocean-stream,
Or wings of doves, or kisses sweet,—
The faithful molécules shall meet !
For meet they must, and meet they will :
They seek and love each other still.

XV.

Forgotten love awakes once more ;
And perished things,—that died of yore,—
Re-born for nobler use,—at last
Complete the uncompleted past.

XVI.

So now,—to view itself,—the pearl
Looks to the laugh of some fair girl!

XVII.

So at her cheeks the rose must gaze
For memories of its former days.

XVIII.

So in her bosom, white and chill,
The marble finds its pureness still.

XIX.

And so the dove, when he complains,
Now chides her in such tender strains
That,—marble as the maid may be!—
She can no longer spurn his plea.

XX.

O you for whom I burn and glow,
Say in what antique portico,
Or in what flower, or gem, or nest,
You heard my passion first confest?
And were you then, O dearest love,
A stone, or pearl, or rose, or dove?



THE ELYSIAN FIELDS.

A MONOLOGUE.

I.

O SINGER of the mournful Lay¹
Wherein the words were each a tear
Shed on thy Friend's too early bier,—
I turn me to thy song to-day.

II.

Twice round the sun the earth hath rolled
Since on that weird October night
The moon arose with all her light
To guide thee to the Bards of Old.

III.

And in their dusky, dim domain
Thy earthly spirit, now divine,—
Although the latest of their line,
Is not the least among their train.

IV.

O thou who on thy Island here
Wert comrade to each flower and stone,—
And wise in all that could be known
Of Nature and her varying year,—

¹ Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

V.

How far hast thou pursued thy quest
In that strange Meadow, faint of hue,
Where every vista is a view
Of some dim Region of the Blest ?

VI.

And are we still to understand
That *there* the flowers are ghostly grey,
And that the apples fall away
To sudden ashes in the hand ?

VII.

Departed poet, sacred shade,
Speak from thy Bower of Asphodel,
And through some runic utterance tell
What new discoveries thou hast made !

VIII.

Grown well acquainted with thy tomb,
Now tell us from thy hallowed dust
If Death be proved a fate so just
That men should hail it as their doom !

IX.

After this earthly life is done,
Is all its fever wholly past ?—
Or, with its purpose but re-cast,
Is there a new career to run ?

X.

Is Death the end of toil and strife,
Or is the transfer but a change
To realms of wider reach and range,
With larger issues than in life ?

XI.

Do we go on from star to star,—
Or, captive to our place of birth,
Shall we still dwell upon the Earth,
Where all our first affections are ?

XII.

This Mind,—which now we call our own,—
Shall it immortally be ours,
Endowed with never-wasting powers,
And Reason ever on its throne ?

XIII.

If so, O thou whose life was long,
And whose career was full and round,—
What further topic hast thou found
For the continuance of thy song ?

XIV.

And from thy larger knowledge now,—
In what fine balance dost thou weigh
The honour of a poet's bay,—
So nobly worn upon thy brow ?

XV.

Do Kings and Queens delight thee *there*?
And art thou laureate unto *them*?
Do sceptre, throne, and diadem
Still daze thee in that misty air?

XVI.

And what to thee said Guinevere?
And are her sorrowing eyes still wet?
And Lancelot,—doth he love her yet?
And hath he there his horse and spear?

XVII.

And doth he tilt in some disguise?—
And doth he in the shadowy list
Win some immortal amethyst,
And carry straight to *her* the prize?

XVIII.

Hath Cleopatra's wound yet healed?
Or did the asp so bite and mar
Her bosom that it shows a scar?—
And hast thou seen Achilles' shield?—

XIX.

Is Helen fair as in the flesh?—
Or is she wasted with the shame
Wherewith her guilt still keeps her name
In ignominy ever fresh?

XX.

Hast thou discoursed with Socrates?—
And did his hemlock prove a balm?—
And is Xantippé's tongue grown calm?—
And is she now less hard to please?

XXI.

Is Danté wandering still afar
From Beatrice?—or are the twain,—
After their earthly love and pain,—
Now twinned at last, like star to star?

XXII.

Doth grim old Charlemagne now smile
When little children, hand in hand,
March up and down, a joyous band,
Above him in his old church-aisle¹?

XXIII.

Doth great Napoleon, to his rue,
Haggard, and pale, and discontent,
And with his heavy brow down bent,
Still mourn the loss of Waterloo?

XXIV.

And Raphael,—doth he there complain
That death stole on him all too soon,
And spoilt his pencil and cartoon
And the best fancies of his brain?

¹ At Aix-la-Chapelle.

XXV.

And what said Wordsworth, Keats, and Poe?—
And how looked *he* from Avon's bank,
Who died and never knew his rank,—
Which surely he at last must know?

XXVI.

Strange that he never dreamed or guessed
That he was greatest of the great!—
The one chief Favourite of Fate!—
The poet who is loved the best!

XXVII.

'Things spiritual'—are they learned
Through something of the self-same ken
That forms the faith of mortal men?—
What hath thy spirit there discerned?—

XXVIII.

Shall Christ the Lord,—'*who tarried there*
(Say the Evangelists) *three days*,'—
Revisit that pale realm, and raise
Its people to the upper air?

XXIX.

Tell us the knowledge that is hid!
Tell us the thoughts a dead man thinks!
Tell us the secret of the Sphinx—
The purpose of the Pyramid!

XXX.

Tell us how every seed of wheat
Can in its tiny self contain
All the whole body, bone, and brain
Of man's terrestrial self complete !

XXXI.

And how the sparrow is so shrewd
As to foresee the moment best
For picking open, in her nest,
The shells that hide as yet her brood !

XXXII.

And how the squirrel thinks to store,—
In summer,—in his hollow-tree,—
The wealth wherewith his house and he
Shall laugh as winter groweth hoar !

XXXIII.

O tell us how the drop of dew
Is guided to each blade of grass,—
And yet how man himself, alas,
Is left to wretchedness and rue !

XXXIV.

Why is the world so full of wrong ?
Why does our sad, degenerate time
So reek with blood and hate and crime ?
O answer with another song !

XXXV.

And tell us why th' assassin smites,—
Not tyrants, as when Caesar fell,—
But chiefs who serve their country well,
As champions of the people's rights!

XXXVI.

O speak to us from underground
(If still thou hast the power to speak)
And say if God be growing weak,
And is to be at last discrowned!

XXXVII.

Why maketh He such poor defence
Against the hellish powers of ill,
Which evermore seem conquering still,
Despite His high Omnipotence?

XXXVIII.

Shares *He* the fate of other kings?
And hath His kingdom had its day?
And must His sceptre pass away
Like other perishable things?

XXXIX.

Or is it *We* who, like the mole,
Are blind, or only partly see
The greatness of the plan which He,—
In wisdom,—fashions as a whole?

XL.

Or if as yet thou hast not caught
A vision of His hidden face,
Perhaps thou dwellest in a place
Where His high mysteries now are taught.

XLI.

And so, O tell us, hast thou still
Thy old delight in subtile themes,
In dark enigmas, curious dreams,
And all the lore of good and ill?

XLII.

And is it true that bier and pall
Must teach us to our bitter cost—
*'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all'?*

XLIII.

And tell us also one thing more—
'Doth sorrow make a mortal wise?'
If so, then, O ye Heavens, chastise
This heart of mine till it be sore!

XLIV.

And say if in the Shadowy Land,
O laureate, now a wandering ghost,
Thou pinest for the isle and coast
Where fell thy harp from out thy hand?

XLV.

If Charon, with his muffled oar,
Should offer thee a ferriage back,
Would thy old annual Butt of Sack
Now tempt thee to thy native shore?

XLVI.

And dost thou know how keen and sharp
Are now the clamours round thy name,
And how the land is crying, '*Shame!*
Let not another have his harp'?

XLVII.

Thy empty place is hard to fill!
Thy harp is lying where it fell!
There let it lie! The fallen shell
Is living, and is laureate still!

Paris, July 10, 1894.



A VENTURESOME VISITOR

IN THE RUE DE LA POMPE.

(From the Chinese.)

I.

O HONEY-BEE, why hast thou come
To wander in these Paris streets?
Their noise will drown thy tiny hum,—
And they are bare of sweets.

II.

So hie thee back to Passy Park,
From which, O truant, thou hast strayed!
The night will soon be growing dark,—
And thou wilt be afraid.

III.

Moreover, beetles now are out,—
With other bugs of low degree;
And they would gladly learn, no doubt,
That thou hast quit thy tree.

IV.

For they are thieves; and all the hoard
Of honied treasure which, with zeal,
Thou all the summer long hast stored,—
They would delight to steal.

V.

Go back to Passy,—to the limb
Wherein thou hast thy rural hive !
Go back before the night is dim,—
Whilst yet thou art alive.

VI.

For if upon these paving-stones
Thy loitering feet too long shall lag,
Some cab will come and crush thy bones,
And burst thy honey-bag.

VII.

Nor is this all; for, odd to say,
It is an ordnance of the town
That strangers in the street must pay
For being trampled down !

VIII.

*'To be run over' (so it saith)
'Is an offence of such a kind
That in addition to your death
You also shall be fined!'*¹

HONG WONG PONG,
Seventh Secretary.

*Chinese Embassy, Ville-Lumière,
Place Victor Hugo.*

¹ It is astonishing to Chinamen and other foreigners in Paris to learn that the cabs and horses have the legal right of way, and that unlucky pedestrians who are knocked down by a wagon-wheel, or by a horse's hoof, are thereby rendered liable to arrest for misdemeanour, and to payment of a fine for obstructing the public road !

FINALE

*HERE, little book, thou comest to an end ;
Yet ere thou bid farewell, add one more rhyme ;
For since these Northern gales of autumn-time,—
That shrivel other leaves,—perchance portend
The like for thee (though this may Heaven forfend !)
Fly with these winds,—which, in their antique prime,
First wafted Odin's runes from clime to clime,—
And let thy flying leaves their rustlings blend
(For one brief moment) with that anthem vast
Whose rhythm eternal tunes the thunder's blast,
The linnet's warble, and the lover's sigh !
Nor grieve if then thy fleeting hour be past.
The bards are one, the lowly and the high !
That thou wert of them, be content and die !*

APPENDIX



THE FATE OF FRISCHLIN.

See p. 280.

NICODEMUS FRISCHLIN was a wit, linguist, poet, and professor in the University of Tübingen, in the sixteenth century. His biography has been elaborately written by a still more celebrated Tübingen professor in the nineteenth; namely, David Strauss, author of the well-known *Life of Jesus*. Until the appearance of Strauss's biography, Frischlin and his devoted wife had lived in the Swabian imagination as the heroic figures of a popular tradition. Exact history has in this case, as in that of William Tell (and other instances), done away with some of the picturesque features of the original folk-lore. The tradition (or one form of it) is given in the poem. The sifted historical facts may be briefly added here.

The brilliant young Frischlin, who at twenty years of age filled the chair of *Belles Lettres*, was a proud son of the people, and refused to be ranked as the inferior of ignorant noblemen who could not write their names. He proclaimed the revolutionary doctrine that if Swabia must have an aristocracy, it should be an aristocracy of merit, and not of birth. He was profuse in his sarcasms at the pretentious nobility, and won great applause from the oppressed plebeians.

He soon raised up for himself a host of enemies among the rich, and a host of friends among the poor. But while his enemies were ever ready to do him harm, his friends were seldom able to render

him help. He thus acquired a perilous celebrity, and was everywhere an object of envy for his genius and scholarship, and of hatred for his unsparing attacks on the privileged classes.

Strange to say, his chief opponent was a member of his own University—his fellow-professor Crusius; who, having been once Frischlin's teacher, could not brook to be so soon eclipsed by his quondam pupil. At least, so it was charged,—and perhaps with some measure of truth. At all events, whether from professional jealousy or some more occult cause, an angry rivalry arose between the elder and the younger professor. They lampooned each other with speech and pen, book and epigram.

It was a controversy of great learning and small courtesy. To quote at this late day what either said of the other would be no favour to the present reader. A more welcome specimen of Frischlin's wit will be found in the following translation of a satire which he wrote against

TAVERN-KEEPERS.

(Hiram soliloquizes, and is overheard by Sichar.)

HIRAM. Full many a thief and robber have I seen hung, yet none who so well deserve the rope as the knaves who are called tavern-keepers; for thieves steal by night, and in darkness; highwaymen plunder in lonesome woods; but publicans attack travellers ostentatiously, and rob them in broad day. Against such plunderers there is no defence. But why do they blazon their signboards with names which unwittingly confess what kind of rogues they are? One hangs out a Raven, and another an Eagle; because with raven's beak and eagle's claws they mean to snatch the money of their guests. Some put up Bears, Lions, and Swine—as tokens that they themselves are voracious, thieving, and filthy. Some parade Oxen and Stags—which is evidence of their instinct for hooking. Then there is the Goat—to represent ill manners and bad smells. Then too the Peacock, for pride. And there are Hens, Geese, and Swans—all to indicate that, like these birds, the guests will be pitilessly plucked.

SICHAR (*aside*). This fellow seems to understand well these symbolic signs.

HIRAM. The sign of the Crown means that the landlord is after

the crowns in other people's pockets. A Sword-blade, or a Dagger, signifies—Here is a cut-throat!

SICHAR. If this fellow were an artist, he would be the best painter of tavern-signs.

HIRAM. The most honest publican is the chap who chooses the sign of Hell—as much as to say, Here you have the Devil himself!

—It is not strange that the writer of the above satire, when he chose to point his pen against the illiterate and tyrannous nobles, should have been equally unsparing. For instance, he said :

‘What an empty pride it is that makes them call no one noble who cannot show a rusty, dusty escutcheon! And yet the most ignorant of the nobility are put far above the most cultivated men—in the palace—in the court of justice—and in all places of honour.’

Such utterances were exasperating, and could not be made with safety in those days.

Accordingly, on the 15th of April, 1590, Frischlin was suddenly arrested in his bed-chamber and hurried off to the high and frowning fortress which now crowns with its crumbling ruins the beautiful crest of Hohen Urach. There was no *habeas corpus* in those rude times. The circumstances of the arrest are thus related by Strauss :

‘At night, and during a violent thunderstorm, came five men in a six-horse carriage, and in the Duke’s name demanded entrance. It was about 10 o’clock. The armed men surrounded Frischlin while he lay in bed, and ordered him to get up, and go with them. In vain the sick man begged them to let him rest during the night, pledging his word that in the morning he would appear before the nobles and judges, and answer for himself, even to the death. They took him out of bed—bandaged his eyes—and drew a black Spanish cap over his head. They bound him on a horse, and by the light of lanterns and torches led him out of the castle-yard. Frischlin cried out, “Is there no loyal Würtemberger who will tell me whither I am to be taken?”’

‘He counted all the brooks which he crossed, hoping thereby to discover the direction of this journey.

‘Chance helped him to this knowledge.

‘In passing by Gretzingen at early dawn, a peasant in a wagon met the party.

“Where did you come from?” asked one of the captors.

“From Urach,” was the reply; which gave the prisoner the first hint of his destination.

—Frischlin’s treatment in his dungeon was severe. At first he was denied pen, ink, and paper. He was then given two quires of writing-paper, which he quickly consumed in writing letters to his wife—the fair Marguerite whose devotion to her husband is one of the cherished associations of Hohen Urach.

Afterwards, the prisoner is found thanking his keepers for more writing-materials—‘without which,’ he says, ‘I could not live.’

He busied himself with literary composition; the fruit of his prison-labours being a long poem called ‘The Hebrais,’ together with a comedy entitled ‘Susanna,’ and a translation of the Psalms of David into Latin.

After his first month’s imprisonment, his hair turned grey.

He was then in his forty-third year.

‘The thought of my wife,’ said he, ‘prevents my sleep.’

This beautiful and devoted woman made many attempts to interest influential persons in the prisoner’s behalf; and she parted with her jewels and personal ornaments to purchase the intercession of a court-officer;—a fee spent in vain.

In one of her letters to the authorities she petitions to be allowed to send her husband some needful clothing, and some comforting books; calling him endearingly her ‘chief treasure in this world.’

In the beginning of November (after half a year’s duration) he had an interview with his aged mother in his cell; who urged him to make his peace with the offended nobles.

What answer he made to her he did not record; for his pen was unexpectedly at the end of its labours for ever.

He suddenly met a tragic death in a brave effort to escape.

His plan was to lower himself from his window by a long cord to a ledge of rocks far below. This line he made by tearing into strips his clothing and blankets. On Sunday night, November 29, 1590, he fastened one end of the line to his window-sill, flung the rest out of the window, and attempted—‘hand under hand,’ like a sailor on a halyard—to let himself down into liberty; but instead, he unfortunately fell and dashed out his life. His dead body was found on the rocks next morning, mangled almost beyond recognition.

The details of his fall are not known. The conjectures are numerous : one of which is, that the line broke ; another, that it was too short ; another, that he lost his grip ; and another, that he missed his foothold.

Strauss could not ascertain in which wing of the castle the prisoner was confined, and therefore could not determine on which side of the mountain he tried to descend. Visitors to the ruins are now told that Frischlin's cell faced the north. This story is plausible ; for if a stone be dropped from the cell that is supposed to be his, it will strike the ledge below, glance off, and roll to the bottom of the valley.

The victim's wounds are circumstantially stated to have been :—the neck broken—the cheeks destroyed—the right hand crushed—the right eye gashed—and a rib in the left side broken in two.

His grave is in the churchyard at Urach, and has never had a monument, nor is the spot marked even with his name !

His kindly-hearted biographer says :

‘Frischlin's grave,—for which man did nothing,—nature adorned. The most beautiful roses grew above it, and many poets have praised the rosy grave of the bard. Nor did the mountain on which he met his death fail of a mystical sign. A clover-leaf with a dark red spot,—a spot which looked like a blood-stain,—sprang up, and still grows there. When this clover is now transplanted, it will not flourish elsewhere.’

—It is remarkable that Strauss (no believer in miracles!) should lend credence to such an improbable freak of nature ; and yet the assertion, as to this exclusive and limited species of clover, with no habitat in the rest of the valley, was confirmed on the spot—to the author of the present ballad—by an intelligent student of botany who professed to have carefully examined into the facts.

THE END.

Oxford

HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

